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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

JOE SLOVO — PROSPECTS FOR ARMED STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

ACTION PROGRAMME OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA (Extracts)

DISCUSSION:

ERIC CHAPMAN — QUESTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY

DAVE GROVE, TED BERROW — PROBLEMS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

C. G. COUZENS — THE FUTURE OF BRITISH TRANSPORT

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Marxism Today

Vol. 12 **No. 7**

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Editorial Comments

VIRTUALLY all French workers in the great strike and sit-in movement, demanded some kind of participation on the factory floor and at all levels in their industry. They refused to regard themselves as a mere appendage to the machine.

It is time that British unions woke up and understood that British employers are driving in the opposite direction. A whole series of moves are being made to strip the unions and shop stewards of such rights of participation as they already have.

This is particularly the case where employers (British and American) are bent on scrapping the existing systems of payment by results for a Measured Working Week.

It would be wrong to regard this as merely the institution of particular Americanised systems of productivity agreements for the traditional British variants of "Payment by Results". Nor need the Measured Day or Week give worse results at the start in as far as the great mass of workers in the factories are concerned. In a few cases it may give better.

Nevertheless there is behind this drive, in many cases, the clear intention to enable managements to get a more absolute control of their factories than they can get where systems of payment by results are being worked.

Is a factory to be run on lines where workers' representatives are daily discussing the terms on which payments shall be made and jobs done, or shall these functions be severely controlled, and all the main payments laid down for a long period ahead as a result of the negotiation of a wages structure based on work measurement?

Autocratic Management

Managements are seeking to move into a position where they can manage in the most autocratic fashion, and go ahead on the basis of an agreement, which diminishes severely the rights of the workers and shop stewards.

As is usual where the measured week is contemplated, the management get livid about the "tea breaks" and similar phenomena. The agreement proposed by Rootes of Coventry wants the restriction of all "personal time allowances" to only 35 minutes per $8\frac{1}{4}$ hours shift. In commenting on this *The Daily Telegraph* says "several of these proposals seem likely to be opposed, notably work study, the tightening up of breaks, and the management-union councils, which would appear to circumvent shop stewards". (May 29th, 1968).

There has been a great deal of controversy, and a number of conferences on participation and workers' control. It would be a sad lapse if while trade unionists were talking about workers' control, employers were forcing through measured day work and undermining some of the freedom to advance the actual influence of the workers and their organisation in the factories.

Effrontery of Harold

There is surely no limit to the effrontery of Harold Wilson. He goes to the Trades Union Celebrations at Manchester to announce the conditions under which *he* is prepared to lift the clamp upon wages.

Leaving out of consideration the pioneering work in the unions of the Socialist parties—the Independent Labour Party and the Social Democratic Federation, Mr. Wilson calmly informed his audience that the TUC formed the Labour Party and nothing would ever be allowed to separate them —this after the Government's incomes policy has antagonised a majority of the unions affiliated to the Trades Union Congress. Is it safe to say that not a single delegate present at the inauguration of the Labour Representation Committee could have imagined that the party he was helping to form would clamp down on the freedom of the unions to bargain collectively. Indeed the party he was helping to form was soon called upon to remove the fetters on collective bargaining which had been fastened by the notorious Taff Vale decision, which made trade unions responsible for any losses incurred by employers in the course of the strike. Only a man of the utmost arrogance and insensitivity could proceed to tell an audience of trade unionists how much longer he intended to keep his curb on wages.

The curb on wages would be kept until there was an export surplus, there was further progress in the national drive for productivity, until there was a greatly improved system of voluntary restraint. In other words Mr. Wilson intends to keep the unions suffering from severe wages restraint as long as the British capitalist economy fails to achieve a surplus in its economic relations with the outside world. The British capitalist economy is however con-

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trolled by the great monopolies, not by the trade unions. If the monopolists fail to achieve a surplus it is the trade unionists who ought to suffer according to Harold. Or the failure to achieve a surplus may be due to the continued high level of expenditure on troops and bases overseas which is supposed to be controlled by the Government. Before there can be the repeal of the legislation enforcing restraint, there must be greater progress in the production drive, says Harold, but it is management and the amount of up-to-date technique that it is prepared to install, that will determine to a considerable extent the growth of productivity. His third demand is that the TUC's own wages vetting must be working effectively to restrain wage increases exactly as the Government wants them. In other words Mr. Wilson is saying that if the TUC agrees to carry out his dirty work with regard to wages, the Government will not require to intervene, but if the TUC refuses or fails to carry out this assignment the Government will intervene with all guns firing. This is what is jokingly called "relying as far as possible on voluntary methods".

British trade unionists ought to remember that General de Gaulle had a more formidable wage freeze than Wilson, backed by a more formidable apparatus of repression, but the French workers smashed that freeze. It is time that the British workers were doing the same with Mr. Wilson's.

It will be noted amongst the electoral demands of the United French Left is "No wages under 600 francs (£12 10s.) per week. General rises in wages and pensions and application of the equal wages for equal work payable to women and young people". When are the British unions going to make a clear pronouncement on a general minimum wage and on equal pay?

Woodcock on France

George Woodcock might have refrained from acting his well-known comic role a few days before the centenary celebrations of the TUC. Asked about the French situation he told reporters that the British workers were not likely to imitate the French. They had other methods than bashing heads in Trafalgar Square. The French workers (in the very wide sense of the term which includes technicians) were not bashing heads, they were occupying factories and engaging in what must surely be the greatest general strike in European history, involving three times as many workers, lasting longer than the British General Strike of 1926, and gaining very substantial concessions. General de Gaulle's wage freeze has gone for a burton. We have not, dear Mr. Woodcock, found a way to do things as well, let alone better than they do in France.

The Dollar Still Rocking

While attention was concentrated on France, the world monetary crisis was drifting into deeper waters. It will be remembered that two months ago the European banks rushed to support the American dollar, against the attacks from de Gaulle. In return, the Americans promised to put their economic position right. They would impose fresh taxation and help to balance their revenue budget, they would cut state expenditure for the same purpose, and would greatly reduce their balance of payment difficulties. The renowned American hustlers have hardly moved to implement these commitments. The increased taxation proposals here ran into a hitch, the balance of payment deficit is not being reduced, and the cost of the Vietnam war is escalating.

It looks as if another attack on the dollar is being mounted in which as usual the pound will be attacked first. This will be the signal for the Tory financial traitors to try and explain that it is all due to Wilson, and that the whole world is waiting for a group of obscure Tory politicians, whose names they do not even know, to be installed as the Government of Britain. It could be that the (capitalist) world monetary system will be split asunder and the "city" and the Government be faced with the stark choice of going with America, in a currency bloc dominated by the dollar, or of a European bloc dominated by the West German mark and the franc, or going on its own on the basis of a floating pound. The last would be the only option consistent with independence but that would hardly commend it to Harold Wilson. The French forced the de Gaullists to hold a General Election. The British financial interests may try to pressurise the Wilson Government to resign in the interests of high finance. Do we really manage things better in Britain?

Helen Keller—Socialist

Few of the obituaries of Helen Keller saw fit to mention that she was at one time one of the best known figures of the American socialist movement.[1]

Her special interest in the blind had helped to make her aware that it was no mere accident that caused so wide an incidence of blindness, and that "too much of it was traceable to wrong industrial conditions and greed of employers".

She was introduced to socialism by John Macy, a young Harvard lecturer who had married her "teacher" Anne Sullivan. He and Anne would read her books from his library including Marx, Engels

[1] Philip S. Foner (Editor)—*Helen Keller: Her Socialist Years.* Contains excellent introduction by Foner. International Publishers, New York, obtainable from Central Books at 13s. 6d.

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and Kautsky. From Germany and Britain she got socialist journals in braille.

In 1909 she became a member of the Socialist Party, though her support for socialism did not become widely known to the public until early in 1912. Then it caused something of a sensation—a joy to socialists, and to reactionaries, including many who had hitherto praised her to the skies, a cause of deep anger.

As Helen herself wrote (in 1924 in a letter to Senator Robert M. La Follette in his presidential candidacy):

> "So long as I confine my activities to social service and the blind, they (the newspapers) compliment me extravagantly, calling me 'arch priest of the sightless' and 'wonder woman' and 'a modern miracle'. But when it comes to a discussion of poverty, and I maintain that it is the result of wrong economics—that the industrial system under which we live is at the root of much of the physical deafness and blindness in the world—that is a different matter. It is laudable to give aid to the handicapped. Superficial charities make smooth the way of the prosperous; but to advocate that all human beings should have leisure and comfort, the decencies and refinements of life, is a Utopian dream, and one who seriously contemplates its realisation must indeed be deaf, dumb and blind."

She frequently wrote in defence of strikes, defended the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) and attacked militarism. In World War I she opposed United States participation in what she considered an imperialist conflict. She questioned the right to speak of fighting in defence of democracy when in the US "Negroes may be massacred and their property burned".

She publicly and warmly welcomed the October Revolution. Nor did she, growing older, turn against her socialist ideas. In 1933 her books were publicly burned by the Nazis—a high compliment. In 1940, on receiving a copy of the autobiography of Art Young, she wrote:

> "There abides with me a gratifying sense that casting my lot with the workers, even if only in dreams and sentiments, has given symmetry and dignity to my womanhood and enabled me to face unashamed the spiritual challenge which is quite as searchingly fiery as the economic ordeal."

Nor did she give in even during the difficult witch-hunting days of Senator McCarthy. In July 1957, she wrote to the Communist leader Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (who was celebrating her 65th birthday in the Federal Women's prison at Alderson, West Virginia) "Loving birthday greetings, dear Elizabeth Flynn! May the sense of serving mankind bring strength and peace into your brave heart". Helen was then 77 years old.

Ghetto Rebellion to Black Liberation

Many of our readers will have seen the report on *Black Power and Liberation* which was delivered last October (and then published as a booklet)[2] by Claude Lightfoot, American Negro, who has been a member since 1931 of the Communist Party of the USA, and who is now the Secretary to its National Committee, in Charge of the Department of Negro Affairs.

This was a powerful piece of analysis of the various trends of black nationalism in the USA He discussed the Marxist attitude to the various forms and facets of black nationalism:

> "In present-day circumstances, we must draw a line between what is progressive and what is reactionary. The brand of nationalism expressed by the Black Muslim movement is basically a reactionary path. We can understand and sympathise with the conditions which are at the roots of this movement. We can hail the many positive strengths which it generates, such as race pride and the dignity it conveys to its members. We feel that its members can make important contributions to the general welfare such as the courageous opposition to the war in Vietnam, by Muhammed Ali.
>
> "But when the movement encourages non-participation in day-to-day struggles for partial demands, when it calls for complete separation of the races on all levels, when it demeans everybody with a white face, when it glorifies everybody with a black face—then, clearly, it is out of touch with reality and leads up a blind alley. Furthermore, wittingly or not, it helps to lay the basis for genocidal treatment of the American Negro. For the divisions among black and white at the grass root level can only pave the way for an American brand of fascism."

Sick Society

Claude Lightfoot's analysis makes it clear that he does not at all call for total rejection of what the Black Muslim movement stands for:

> "Even their ultimate desire, a black-led republic within continental United States, if manifested by a large segment of the black community in socialist America, would be honoured if American Communists had anything to do about it. Moreover, under such conditions, a separate state would receive the fullest economic, political and social co-operation, to make of it truly a free and prosperous community."

He continues, discussing other trends:

> "But the basic content of the main waves of nationalism, . . . is progressive and goes in the direction of a struggle against capitalism and

[2] Claude Lightfoot—*Black Power and Liberation: a Communist View*, New Outlook publishers, New York, available through Central Books, 4s. 6d.

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imperialism. As such, we support it and will do all within our power to help achieve the goals the black freedom fighters place."

Claude Lightfoot discusses the Communist attitude to the appeal of the young radical Negroes for guerrilla warfare in the ghettoes and cities of the USA, and self-critical analyses both the achievements and weaknesses of communists in their acts and attitudes on the Negro question.

Now he has written a much fuller study of the whole question under the title *Ghetto Rebellion to Black Liberation*.[3]

He describes the US economy a sick, disturbed and geared to profit, war and racialism, leading to a "sick society" permeated with violence and inhumanity. The assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy makes his analysis still more timely.

Racialism, he explains, is built-in to this society. Whilst he considers the call for guerrilla warfare in the United States as suicidal, he states the case for armed self-defence in the ghettos. No body of thought other than Marxism, he considers can produce a viable alternative to save the USA from expansionist war abroad or race war at home.

His essential thesis is that real black liberation is not possible without strong white allies, particularly among the working class.

Marx's Library

We drew attention to Marx's love of and way with, books, in our January issue. Readers should find the following extracts from an article by Bruno Kaiser—an authority on Marx—of interest. It appeared in the May issue of *Einheit*—the theoretical journal of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. It is entitled "The Books in Maitland Park" (Marx lived at No. 1 Maitland Park Road from 1864 to 1875 and at No. 41 Maitland Park Road from 1875 until his death in 1883).

After referring to Marx's "ruthless" way with books—making notes on the margin, underlining, etc., Kaiser writes:

> "The margins of his books are full of written commentary and exclamations ranging from a withering 'asinus' (ass) or 'Blodsinn' (idiotic nonsense) to a joyful 'bravo' supplemented by long commentaries and elaborations. . . .
>
> "Marx dealt summarily with printer's errors which he would strike out energetically and replace with his corrections in his small, rapid, sloping handwriting. He would correct mistakes—even small unimportant ones—in French, English, German or Russian books in the language concerned. . . .
>
> "Marx's 'underlining system' involved not only pens and pencils but also different coloured crayons. The result was that his books really looked like Joseph's coat—being of many colours. The individual colours used do not seem to have had any special significance as far as reference is concerned and appear to have been more or less haphazard. 'Dogs-ear'-ing—turning down the ends of pages—which Lafargue refers to in his 'Reminiscences' of Marx, was not one of Marx's fixed habits. He only did this when he wanted to find a particular page or passage which he was going to quote in one of his own books. . . ."

According to Lefargue, writes Kaiser:

> "Marx's library contained 'over a 1,000 volumes'. This is the only definite figure which has come down to us and could well be an underestimate. The thousand included the books collected by Marx from his school-days until the end of the revolution in 1848, from which a 40-volume edition of Goethe and other treasures prized by Marx, were lost. . . . His library in Maitland Park Road however contained books covering all spheres of human thought. Works of poetry and literature, of Latin and Greek classical writers, of Shakespeare and Molière, Dante and Ariosto, Lessing, Swift and Feuerbach, rubbed shoulders with books on law, on pig-breeding, political economy, philosophy and history, with 18th century and contemporary books, with magnificent folios and quartos in beautiful old bindings and with quite ordinary looking books which, however, occupied positions of honour for they were mostly books either dedicated to him or written by, his comrades—Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, books written by Wilhelm Liebknecht for example—and countless periodicals and leaflets from various countries illustrating the international struggle of the working class."

TUC 1868-1968

This year, 1968, sees the one hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the TUC. This important event is being suitably commemorated, and the TUC has issued its own special history.

First in the field, however, was *1868, Year of the Unions*—a documentary survey, edited with an introduction and notes by Edmund Frow and Michael Katanka.[4]

This is a most useful and valuable piece of documentation centring around some of the main events, problems and ideas involving the trade union movement in the year that the TUC was founded.

The book contains a valuable introduction by the authors giving a brief historical background to the actual formation of the TUC with most interesting data about the wages and working conditions of different sections of the working class, the political

[3] Claude Lightfoot—*Ghetto Rebellion to Black Liberation*, International Publishers, New York, available from Central Books from mid-July, 18s. 6d.

[4] Katanka Books Ltd., 35s.

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campaigns in which the working-class movement was involved, and especially, the development of the trade unions and Trades Councils leading to the formation of the TUC.

This is followed by a report of the actual foundation Congress of the TUC itself; by extracts from the evidence given by Robert Applegarth, George Potter and William Allen before the Royal Commission on Trade Unions in 1867; by a review of trade union "Outrages" and other evidence before this Commission; by two interesting articles, one on "The Master and Servant Act" by Frederick Harrison, the other on "The Social Future of the Working Class" by Edward Beesley; by an explanatory chapter on the "Main personalities and Events" of the year 1868, and finally by a most helpful bibliography.

Only 34 delegates, representing 118,000 trade unionists, attended the foundation Conference of the TUC. As the Editors say (p. 9) it caused "hardly a ripple . . . some of the most important trade union leaders did not trouble to attend. Some even opposed it . . .". Today, one hundred years afterwards, it is a different story reflecting the great advances made by the trade union movement of our country, and also in the very different status now enjoyed by the TUC. At the Brighton Trades Union Congress, 1967, there were 1,059 delegates representing 169 trade unions, with an affiliated membership of close on 9 million, 8,787,282 to be exact. The range of subjects dealt with is likewise infinitely larger, spanning as it does all the issues of national and international problems facing the working class.

The first TUC meeting held at Manchester discussed "papers" on "Trade Unions, an absolute necessity"; Trade Unions and political economy; Regulation of hours of labour; and Technical Education; and at its conclusion passed the following resolution which in effect brought the TUC into being:

> "It is highly desirable that the trades of the United Kingdom should hold an annual Congress for the purpose of bringing the trades into closer alliance and to take action in all Parliamentary matters pertaining to the general interest of the working class."

Today, as in 1868, the task is to make the unions fighting weapons in the hands of the working class, and the struggle being waged against the Incomes Policy and against the penal legislation which accompanies shows that, while big advances have been made, some of the battles of 100 years ago still remain to be won.

Now, as in 1868, there has been a Royal Commission on Trade Unions sitting from which nothing good could be expected by trade unionists. The remarks of Mr. Dronfield of Sheffield on that earlier Commission would seem to be apposite:

> "He concluded that the Commission was unworthy of their confidence (hear, hear). It had not shown a disposition to do them justice, and they ought to be on the alert to see that no legislation should be admitted which might be injurious to their interests (applause)."

One of the most interesting reproductions in the book is a replica of a "Document"—the statement which employers sought to force their workers to sign renouncing trade unionism. It was issued in connection with the lock-out of building operatives in London in 1859 by their trade union, and is headed: "Fellow Workers—never consent to resume work until this odious Document is unconditionally withdrawn." The Document reads:

> "*I declare that I am not* now, nor will I during the continuance of my engagement with you, *become a member or support any society* which directly or indirectly interferes with the arrangements of this or any other Establishment, or *the hours or terms of labour*, and that I recognise the right of the employers and employed *individually to make any trade engagement on which they may choose to agree.*"

At the bottom of such Documents it was normal to print—"Retained by the Master builders". This is done, but the following is added in the leaflet, "To light your pipe with". Modern trade unionists would, no doubt, convey the same sentiments in more colourful language.

Lenin's Works—Volume 39

Volume 39 of the Collected Works of Lenin, which has just been published in English, is of very special interest. It consists almost entirely of the Notebooks which Lenin compiled when preparing his classic work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. The Notebooks, all 722 pages of them brilliantly translated by Clemens Dutt, are reproduced more or less exactly as Lenin left them—with his transcriptions of passages from works he had consulted and his marginal comments on these passages.

This is material of immense value for every student of the economic and political development of modern society.

And it shows with what scientific thoroughness Lenin studied his sources (or "did his homework", as it is often expressed). That Lenin's *Imperialism* is a masterpiece of economic and political analysis is well known. This volume of his Works shows how such masterpieces are made—by the thorough study, sifting and critical analysis of the facts. It shows how Lenin's thought was the exact opposite of "dogmatic". He reached his conclusions, which he

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expressed so clearly and trenchantly in his published works, by investigating the facts—as opposed to those who twist the facts to suit their conclusions.

With this volume, the English edition of Lenin's Collected Works is nearing its completion. Originally, it was announced that there would be 40 volumes. However, there are still several more to come after Volume 39, since a good deal of additional correspondence and other material is being included in the English edition which was published in Russian only subsequently to the 40-volume edition on which most of the English edition is based. A final volume will contain a complete analytical Index to the whole.

Anti-Communism and Scholarship

The second volume of Julius Braunthal's *History of the International*, covering the period 1914-43, is a massive volume of nearly 600 pages[5] and is liberally supplied with footnotes and appendices. It looks at first sight like a work of great scholarship, and indeed it has been highly praised by some reviewers on this account. *The Times Literally Supplement* (1.2.68) said that the second volume was "as masterly as the first" with "the same meticulous scholarship"; while the *Tribune* reviewer (15.12.67) said it was "a fine work of scholarship".

Julius Braunthal's thesis is that the split in the working-class movement caused by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in founding the Third International fatally crippled the forces of the working class and was "a disaster for socialism". He has rigorously selected (with few exceptions) those facts and quotations from articles and speeches which accord with his theory and omitted those which do not. In the result he has produced a book (very well written and translated) which makes out an apparently convincing defence of all the actions of the social-democratic leaders in Germany, Italy, France, Britain, etc., and which throws all the blame for the successive failures, up to and including the Spanish Civil War, on the Communists.

Here is one illustration of the author's principles of selection and scholarship. Dealing with Italy in 1920 he quotes at length from Serrati, a leader of the Italian Socialist Party, who was opposed at the time to the Third International's demand that the right-wing reformist leaders (Turati, etc.) should be expelled from the Socialist Party. In a footnote on p. 206 he quotes Gramsci as saying that Serrati was "more beloved than any party leader has ever been before in our country". But Braunthal omits the fact that Gramsci's article, from which this passage was taken, was written in 1926, just after Serrati had died, and that in 1924 Serrati had joined the Italian Communist Party and become a member of its central committee. He also fails to mention the strong criticism that Gramsci was making of Serrati and the other Socialist leaders in 1920.

Another example. On pp. 75-76 Braunthal summarises (but without giving any page references) the principles of party organisation set out by Lenin in *What is to be Done* (1902) and *Letter to a Comrade* (1903). He says that Lenin wanted a party of "professional revolutionaries" which would lead the working classes but "should not actually admit them to membership" and which would be directed by a central body composed of "intellectual leaders". But there is nothing in either of these works of Lenin to justify these statements. Lenin made it clear that the party should consist of workers as well as of full-time professional revolutionaries (see also *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* where Lenin defends himself against the allegation that he wanted only a party of conspirators). Lenin never proposed that the leading body should be confined to intellectuals, and in the *Letter to a Comrade* he specifically says that the St. Petersburg committee should contain both workers and intellectuals.

On page 306 he quotes Allen Hutt as saying, in his *Postwar History of the British Working Class*, p. 192, that during the General Strike and its aftermath "The British Communists completely missed the opportunity . . . to win really unshakable authority among the decisive elements of the working class." But what Allen Hutt actually wrote was that the Communists "failed fully to seize the opportunity."

Perhaps enough has been said to show that fanatical anti-communism is not the best basis for meticulous scholarship.

Fifty Years

Progress Publishers of Moscow have recently published in English an interesting book, *Fifty Years of a New Era* by Yuri Frantsev, which within its 170 pages contains much of great interest.

The author gives a detailed analysis of the problem: the 1917 October Revolution and the Modern World. The violent development of the contradictions between labour and capital on all continents, the disintegration of the colonial system, the decisive victories of the cause of peace, democracy and socialism—all this, argues the author, is convincing proof of the vast and lasting significance of the great Russian revolution.

Frantsev shows the enormous influence which the revolution has exerted on social development. Moreover this revolution, which destroyed social, national and spiritual oppression in the old Russia, has also had a great impact on the liberation move-

[5] Nelson, £6 6s.

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ment throughout the world, Lastly the book underlines the international significance of the successful building of socialism in the USSR, with its profound impact on politics, industry, education, science, culture and modern society in general.

Yuri Frantsev is pecularly fitted to write a book of this nature. He is a prominent Soviet sociologist, and has headed a number of higher educational institutions such as the Academy of Social Sciences of which he was Rector. He has also been Director of the Institute for Foreign Relations, Head of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Assistant Editor-in-Chief of *Pravda*.

At present he is Editor-in-Chief of *World Marxist Review*, as well as being an alternative member of the Central Committee of the CPSU to which he was elected at the 22nd and 23rd Congresses.

Capitalist Planning and the Left

"Capitalist Economic Planning and the Left" is the heading under which the Economic Committee of the Communist Party is organising its annual discussion conference this year. This conference aims to analyse and discuss the main features of government economic policy and the nature of the changes that these features have been bringing about in trade union struggle, and in the political strategy of fighting for the socialist transformation of society.

The opening session will discuss a paper on state intervention in the British economy. This will be followed by a session devoted to comparing British economic policy to that of other capitalist countries. The final session is intended to discuss forms of response by the Left to the situation and the means by which the fight for Socialism may be improved. Various papers have already been commissioned and intending participants are invited to submit their own papers, if they wish to do so, for pre-conference circulation. As is usual the attendance at this conference is not restricted to members of the CPGB.

Prospects for Armed Struggle in South Africa

Joe Slovo

We print below a paper read at the National Students Conference on "Revolution in Southern Africa", held at Oxford on March 9th, 1968.

The Armed Struggle Spreads

THE whole of that part of Southern Africa which is controlled by racial minorities is experiencing either consistent and regular guerrilla activity or is faced with advanced preparation for its commencement.

Angola[1] was followed by Mocambique[2] and then by South-West Africa[3]. For Portugal (already extended by the brilliantly successful operations of PGAIC in its West African colony of Guinea Bissao) the problem of guerrilla operations in its territories is beginning to assume the proportions of a major crisis. Early this year Dr. Salazar, speaking of Angola and Mocambique, conceded that "if the troubles there continue very much longer, they will diminish and destroy our ability to carry on".[4]

[1] First outbreaks of organised violence occurred in March 1961. Various factors including division in the guerrilla ranks, and events in the Congo (which accommodated considerable guerrilla reserves) enabled the Portuguese temporarily to render ineffective a movement which at its height had thousands of guerrillas in the field and had gained control of considerable territory in the north. In the last few years a regrouping has taken place and once again there is evidence of guerrilla activity on a number of fronts. The premier organisation leading the liberation struggle in Angola is the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) led by Dr. Agosthino Neto and Mario Pinto de Andrade. Roberto Holden's GRAE is in disfavour with the OAU.

In a recent interview in Bomako, Mali, Dr. Neto announced that MPLA's headquarters were being moved from Brazzaville to one of the "regions under our control in Angola". He also claimed that "MPLA militants now control one-third of Angolan territory which carries one-fifth of the population". There are reported to be 30,000 Portuguese troops in Angola.

[2] The armed struggle in Mocambique was launched in September 1964, by FRELIMO an amalgamation of several earlier movements. Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, the

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And now the guerrilla front against foreign and minority rule has been extended to Rhodesia where since August 13th, 1967, guerrilla units of South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) and Rhodesia's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) have been involved in armed clashes with South African and Rhodesian military forces.[5] The official admission of government losses of eight dead and fourteen wounded in these early engagements is disputed by the ANC and ZAPU, and appears to be an underestimation in the light of the reported number of casualties which filled Rhodesian hospitals. Despite early attempts to denigrate the calibre of the guerrilla forces, the scale of the fighting, the tenacity of the guerrillas in hand to hand combat and the effectiveness and sophisticated quality of some of the ambushes even at this early stage, were a pointer to future possibilities.[6]

According to press announcements, the collaboration between ANC and ZAPU guerrilla forces was not coincidental but was part of joint planned action in the sense that "the fighting that is presently going on in the Wankie area is indeed being carried out by a combined force of ZAPU and ANC which marched into the country as comrades-in-arms on a common route, each bound to its destination. It is the determination of those combined forces to fight the common settler enemy to the finish, at any point of encounter as they make their way to their respective fighting zones".[7]

This alliance has its historical roots in a situation which, in many fundamental respects, is common to both peoples. Rhodesia under Smith is more and more embracing the South African type of political framework. Its survival in the face of a moderate amount of international pressure is almost undoubtedly due to the considerable bolstering up of its economy by South Africa. This same role of saviour of "white civilisation" in Rhodesia is being played by South Africa in the military field.

In Rhodesia

It is reasonable to infer that if the Smith group could have avoided calling in South African troops to cope with the first batch of guerrillas it would have preferred to do so. As it is, it lays itself open to the charge that its capacity to muster sufficient internal support to deal with this type of situation is suspect. And indeed it is inconceivable that, in the long run, this micro-community of 200,000 whites could muster either sufficient resources or morale to cope with a growing guerrilla movement which would in varying degrees gain the allegiance of the politically deprived four million Africans.

The presence of South Africa's armed forces on Rhodesian soil is an indication (if another is really needed) that the minority régimes in the whole of Southern Africa have come to regard the survival of white rule as indivisible. In this sense South Africa's strategic borders are more and more conceived as extending to the northernmost parts of Angola, Mocambique and Rhodesia.[8] In this sense too there must be an extremely important strategic connection between the efforts of the guerrilla forces in every part of occupied Southern Africa and we can therefore expect increasing collaboration between all the organisations in the area which stands at the head of people's armed units.

The enormity of the task facing ANC guerrillas

President of FRELIMO claims to control a fifth of the country (northern districts of Niassa and Cabo Delgado). There are reported to be 50,000 Portuguese troops in Mocambique.

[3] According to evidence which emerged in the recent trial in Pretoria, South Western African guerrillas under the control of the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) established a training camp in the territory in 1965 which operated undetected for close on a year.

[4] Quoted in an editorial in the Johannesburg *Rand Daily Mail* (6/1/1968).

[5] According to press reports the main areas of operations appear to have been at Wankie, Zambesia River Valley, Northern Matabeleland, and the District of Bulawayo, West of the Livingstone Bulawayo railway, Urungwe district and the Siplilo district.

The biggest clash lasting 48 hours appears to have been at Tjolotje. The usual ploy of describing the joint efforts of the Vorster-Smith armed forces as a "police action" is open to question when regard is had to facts like the use of Hunter jets, armed helicopters, etc.

[6] Report of Lawrence Fellows (*New York Times*, 5/10/1967).

[7] Statement issued on August 19th, 1967, by Oliver Tambo, Deputy President of the ANC and J. R. D. Chikerema, Vice-President of ZAPU.

[8] FRELIMO has for long claimed that South Africa has been helping to arm and train the Portuguese; also that whites from South Africa have been fighting in the Portuguese units. In October 1967 the South African Foreign Minister spoke of "mutual security arrangements" between South Africa and the other states in Southern Africa. Also a clear pointer of things to come is contained in the report (Johannesburg *Sunday Times*, 26/11/1967) of a speech by the Administrator of Natal, Mr. T. J. A. Gardener, on the occasion of the establishment of the Mocambique Soldiers' Comfort Fund, in which he said that to fob off terrorism as the actions of a few thousand disorganised and ill-trained insurgents was dangerous and irresponsible and that it was time South Africans realised that if the 80,000 soldiers whom Portugal had in Mocambique and Angola had to be withdrawn tomorrow South Africa would become involved in the terrorist war within weeks. He said further that South Africa would have the fullest justification "to extend its Rhodesian fight against terrorists to the two Portuguese territories".

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within South Africa itself gave rise previously to suggestions that the liberation of Southern Africa should be approached as a project to be achieved in geographic stages—first Mocambique, then Angola and in the end South Africa. This strategy appears never to have found favour in the ANC or in any of the other liberatory movements: and for good reason. There can be little doubt that when Portuguese rule in Angola and Mocambique reaches a crisis point, Salazar's friends in South Africa (looking to their own future) will intervene on a massive scale. Their capacity to do so and their capacity to meet mounting military pressures in Rhodesia, will, in part, be dependent upon events within their own country and in particular, on the extent to which the South African guerrilla probes take root and menace internal stability. Similarly, every victory in Angola, Mocambique, South-West Africa and Rhodesia, brings with it untold psychological and material advantages for armed units operating within the Republic.

The South African Guerrillas

The ANC has not attempted to hide the fact that its guerrillas are in the process of making their way to their own fighting zone. An underground leaflet —*We are at War*—distributed recently by the ANC's illegal apparatus within the country, talks of the Rhodesian battles and states "soon there will be battles in South Africa. We will fight until we have won, however long it takes and however much it will cost".

Is this idle talk? The inherent weakness of the Smith group and the Portuguese and their vulnerability to organised military insurrection is patent. Can the same be said of South Africa at this stage? Is it not being too sanguine to expect a successful outcome to armed confrontation between the very considerable resources and weapons of the white controlled South African state and the inexperienced lightly armed guerrillas? Where are the sanctuary-providing and logistically important friendly borders? Where are the Sierra Maestras, the jungles, the swamps, the paddy fields?

These questions have reference to the sort of model which has been built up over the years in people's minds of the ideal and classical type set of conditions which make guerrilla operations a feasible proposition and they undoubtedly have an important place in any serious assessment of its prospects. But we must not overdo historical analogy. There is in fact no classical type model of physical conditions to which successful guerrilla struggle conforms. Different geographical factors call for different methods and forms of guerrilla struggle.[9] I shall return to this.

[9] Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Chapter 1.

Political Prerequisites

The only universal prerequisites are to be sought in the general political situation rather than in physical or geographic factors. Given a colonial type situation, armed struggle becomes feasible if and only if the following political conditions are present.

Firstly, a disillusionment on the part of the majority of the people with the prospect of achieving its liberation by traditional and non-violent processes,

Secondly, a readiness on the part of the people to respond in varying degrees and ways to the call for armed confrontation—from actually joining the guerrillas to making his path easy and that of the enemy hard,[10] and

Thirdly, the existence of a political leadership capable not only of gaining the organised allegiance of the people for armed struggle but which has both the experience and the ability to carry out the painstaking process of planning, preparation and overall direction of the conduct of operations.

A final judgment on the extent to which the present South African situation conforms to these requisites needs a little more than formal statistical and analytical equipment. It requires assessments by indigenous political activists who know and understand not only the demonstrable facts but who, in addition, have a "feel" for their people, a sensitivity to their mood and the sort of revolutionary instinct which enables them at every given stage to differentiate between the possible and the fanciful. These qualities are nurtured by years of intimate political nexus between a leader, a people, and a situation. We must approach with extreme caution the attempts of outsiders (however well-motivated) whether it be in Africa or Latin America, to legislate for others in this respect.

In South Africa, as in all other countries, a true assessment of these factors is primarily the function of the Liberatory organisations and their leaders.

Objective and Subjective Conditions

Of course favourable conditions for armed struggle ripen historically. But the historical process must not be approached as if it were a mystical thing outside of man which in a crude deterministic sort of way sets him tasks to which he responds. In this sense to sit back and wait for the evolvement of objective conditions which constitute a "revolutionary situation" amounts in some cases to a dereliction of leadership duties. What people, expressing themselves in organised activity, do or abstain from doing, hastens or retards the historical process and helps or hinders the creation of favourable con-

[10] Leaflet—*We are at War*.

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ditions for armed struggle. *Indeed in one sense the process of creating favourable conditions for military struggle does not end until the day of victory.* Given the sort of minimum preconditions I referred to above, the actual commencement and sustaining of guerrilla activity operates as an extremely important factor in creating more favourable conditions for eventual victory. But it is not the sole factor.[11] Other forms of mass activity, including those inspired by the success of the guerrilla units also play a vital role.

Of course, no political struggle (and this is what guerrilla struggle essentially is) can be taken up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances.[12] It does not, however, follow that licence must be given for every act of adventurism, irresponsibility and "trying your luck".

There is not a single serious segment of the organised liberatory movement which does not believe that, in a general sense, political conditions in South Africa are favourable for the commencement and development of armed struggle. This does not necessarily imply a belief that there exists at the moment a classical-type revolutionary situation, with an all-round revolutionary insurrection as an immediate possibility.

Militancy in the Towns

Is there evidence that the course upon which the ANC has embarked has a political basis in the existing South African situation? There is, I believe, abundant evidence that it has.

The Africans of South Africa have a history which is rich in resistance to alien rule not only in the initial period of colonisation but also in the last few decades when it reached new heights. The people have over and over again demonstrated their capacity to act at a most sophisticated political level.

The 1950s and early 1960s witnessed four impressive nation-wide general strikes all called by the ANC and its allies. The significance of these strikes should not be underestimated. On each occasion, hundreds of thousands of urban workers risked their jobs and their consequent right to remain in an urban area, in quest not for reform, not for better working conditions, but in response to a purely political call to demonstrate a demand for votes, opposition to racial laws and so on.

In the face of repression trade union organisation was minimal and the response was an important pointer to the high level of political consciousness which a half-century of urbanisation combined with vigorous political leadership had inculcated into the townspeople. There are many more examples to be found in the 1950s and 1960s which illustrate the capacity of those in the urban areas to react impressively to calls for action involving both tenacity and sacrifice—the defiance campaign of 1952-3, the bus boycotts of the late 1950s, women's resistance against the extension of pass laws to them, the pre-Sharpeville anti-pass campaigns.

Militancy in the Rural Areas

And what of the people in the countryside, which is the focal point of guerrilla activity in the initial stages? Here, too, there is convincing evidence of a peasantry which, despite centuries of intensive repression, lacks submissiveness. In the very recent past and in many important areas it has demonstrated a capacity for action to the point of armed resistance. In Sekhukhuniland (Transvaal) in the late 1950s the peasantry, partly armed, doggedly resisted the attempts by the authorities to replace the traditional leaders of the people with government-appointed servants—so-called "Bantu Authorities". In Zululand similar resistance was encountered.

The most intense point of peasant resistance and upsurge was amongst the Pondo in the Transkei. By March 1960 a vast popular movement has arisen, unofficial administrative units were set up including People's Courts. From the chosen spots in the mountains where thousands of peasants assembled illegally came the name of the movement—"INTABA" (the mountain). Although this revolt had its origin in local grievances, the aim of the resistance soon became the attainment of basic political ends and it came to adopt the full programme of the ANC.[13]

What is also significant about many of these

[11] Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution* tends to proceed from the proposition that "the most important form of propaganda is military action" to a conclusion that in most of Latin America the creation of militarily skilled guerrilla foci is sufficient to bring about favourable conditions for an eventual people's military victory. Thus he underrates the vital connection between the guerrilla struggle (which in its early stages must of necessity be of a limited magnitude) and other forms of militant mass activity. He sees the *FOCO* (which in terms of his approach must assume overall political as well as military leadership) as having (certainly in the initial phases) to cut itself off from the local population. There are many indications including the increasing devotion of resources to mass illegal propaganda throughout the country that the ANC's approach on this important question is different.

[12] "World History would indeed be very easy to make if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favourable chances"—Karl Marx in a letter to L. Kugelman (April 17th, 1871).

[13] A detailed description of these events and their significance is contained in *South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt* by Govan Mbeki. (Penguin African Library.)

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actions in the countryside is that, despite the traditionally strict legal sanctions against the possession by non-whites of any arms or ammunition, they always manage on appropriate occasions to emerge with an assortment of prohibited weapons in their hands.

These then are pointers to the validity of the claim by the ANC that the African majority of the country can be expected to respond in growing numbers to a lead which holds out real prospects of destroying white supremacy, albeit in a long and protracted war. The convictions held by all African political groupings (except those sponsored by the government) that the white state can be shifted by nothing short of violence, reflects what is today both an incontrovertible objective fact and a belief held by a majority of ordinary people both in town and countryside.

The Objective Difficulties—Military and Economic Superiority

If then all these subjective elements in the situation tend to argue in favour of the ANC decision, what about some of the formidable objective difficulties? On the face of it the enemy of the guerrilla is in stable command of a rich and varied economy which, even at the stage when it is not required to extend itself, can afford a military budget of £186 million. He has a relatively well-trained and efficient army and police force. He can draw on considerable manpower resources because he has the support of most of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ million privileged whites who can be expected to fight with great ferocity and conviction (albeit one that is born of economic aggrandisement).

In addition, South Africa has very influential and powerful friends. In a situation of crisis they may well lose their existing public inhibitions to openly associate with and bolster up the racist regime.

If there is one lesson that the history of guerrilla struggles has taught, it is that the material strength and resources of the enemy is by no means a decisive factor. Witness the resources at the disposal of the French in Algeria—at the height of the fighting 600,000 troops were supplied and serviced by a leading industrial nation whose economy was quite outside the area of military operations. In terms of pure material strength and almost limitless resources can anyone surpass the USA in Vietnam? And yet no amount of modern industrial backing, technical know-how or fire power appears to sway the balance in favour of the invaders. What about the spectacle of Grivas and his Cyprus group challenging the British army with 47 rifles, 27 automatic weapons and seven revolvers? ("It was with these arms and these alone, that I kept the fight going for almost a year without any appreciable reinforcements.")[14]

The answer lies in this. Guerrilla warfare, almost by definition, posits a situation in which there is a vast imbalance of material and military resources between the opposing sides. It is designed to cope with a situation in which the enemy is infinitely superior in relation to every conventional factor of warfare. It is par excellence the weapon of the materially weak against the materially strong.

Guerrilla Tactics Designed to Cope With Superior Military Forces

Given its popular character and given a populace which increasingly sides with and shields the guerrilla whilst at the same time opposing and exposing the enemy, the survival and growth of a people's army is assured by a skilful exercise of tactics. Surprise, mobility and tactical retreat makes it difficult for the enemy to bring into play its superior firepower in any decisive battles. No individual battle is fought under circumstances unfavourable to the guerrillas. Superior forces can be harassed, weakened and, in the end, be destroyed.

> "There is a saying: 'the guerrilla is the maverick of war'. He practises deception, treachery, surprise and night operations. Thus, circumstances and the will to win often oblige him to forget romantic and sportsmanlike concepts. . . . Some disparaging people call this 'hit and run'. That is exactly what it is! Hit and run, wait, stalk the enemy, hit him again and run . . . perhaps this smacks of not facing up to the enemy. Nevertheless, it serves the goal of guerrilla warfare: to conquer and destroy the enemy."[15]

The absence of an orthodox front, of fighting lines; the need of the enemy to attentuate his resources and lines of communication over vast areas; his need to protect the widely-scattered installations on which his economy is dependent (because the guerrilla pops up now here, now there): these are amongst the factors which serve in the long run to compensate in favour of the guerrilla for the disparity in the starting strength of the adversaries. I stress the words *in the long run* because it would be idle to dispute the considerable military advantages to the enemy of his high level of industrialisation, his ready-to-hand reserves of white manpower and his excellent roads, railways and air transport which facilitates swift manoeuvres and speedy concentration of personnel.

The Unfavourable Factors in Perspective

But we must also not overlook the fact that over a period of time many of these very same unfavour-

[14] *The Memoirs of General Grivas* (Longmans), p. 22.

[15] Che Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare*, p. 114.

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able factors will begin to operate in favour of the liberation force:

(a) The ready-to-hand resources including food production depend overwhelmingly upon non-white labour which, with the growing intensity of the struggle, will not remain docile and co-operative.

(b) The white manpower resources may seem adequate initially but must become dangerously stretched as guerrilla warfare develops. Already extremely short of skilled labour—the monopoly of the whites—the mobilisation of a large force for a protracted struggle would place a further burden on the workings of the economy.

(c) In contrast to many other major guerrilla struggles (Cuba is one of the exceptions) the enemy's economic and manpower resources are all situated within the theatre of war and there is no secure external pool (other than direct intervention by a foreign state) safe from sabotage, mass action and guerrilla action on which the enemy can draw.

(d) The very sophisticated character of the economy with its well-developed system of communications makes it a much more vulnerable target. In an underdeveloped country the interruption of supplies to any given region may be no more than a local setback. In a highly sensitive modern economic structure of the South African type, the successful harassment of transport to any major industrial complex would inevitably inflict immense damage to the economy as a whole and to the morale of the enemy. (The South African forces would have the task of keeping intact about 30,000 miles of railway line spread over an area of over 400,000 square miles!)

Terrain and Friendly Borders

One of the more popular misconceptions concerning guerrilla warfare is that a physical environment which conforms to a special pattern is indispensable—thick jungle, inaccessible mountain ranges, swamps, a friendly border, and so on.

The availability of this sort of terrain is, of course, of tremendous advantage to the guerrillas especially in the early non-operational phase when training and other preparatory steps are undertaken and no external bases are available for this purpose. When the operations commence, the guerrilla cannot survive, let alone flourish, unless he moves to areas where people live and work and where the enemy can be engaged in combat. If he is fortunate enough to have behind him a friendly border or areas of difficult access which can provide temporary refuge it is, of course, advantageous, although it sometimes brings with it its own set of problems connected mainly with supplies.[17]

But guerrilla warfare can be, and has been, waged in every conceivable type of terrain, in deserts, in swamps, in farm fields, in built-up areas, in plains, in the bush and in countries without friendly borders. *The sole question is one of adjusting survival tactics to the sort of terrain in which operations have to be carried out.*

In any case in the vast expanse that is South Africa, a people's force will find a multitude of variations in topography; deserts, mountains, forests, veld and swamps. There might not appear to be a single impregnable Sierra Maestra or impenetrable jungle but the country abounds in terrain which in general is certainly no less favourable for guerrilla operations than some of the terrain in which the Algerians or the resistance movements in occupied Europe operated. Tito, when told that a certain area was "as level as the palm of your hand and with very little forest" retorted "what a first-class example it is of the relative unimportance of geographical factors in the developing of a rising".

In particular, South Africa's tremendous size will make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the white régime to keep the whole of it under armed surveillance in strength and in depth. Hence, an early development of a relatively safe (though shifting) rear is not beyond the realm of possibility. The undetected existense of the SWAPO training camp for over a year and, more especially, the survival for years in the mountains and hills in the Transkei of the leaders of "INTARA" during the military occupation of the area after the 1960 Pondo revolt are both of importance in this context.

[17] Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, pp. 120-125.

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Action Programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

We print below extracts from the Action Programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia which was adopted at the Plenary Session of the Central Committee on April 5, 1968.

The full Report contains about 27,000 words and, for reasons of space, we are only able to reprint about 12,000.

We print the English translation provided by the Information Bulletin of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia with a few minor corrections made by ourselves, so that it cannot be considered as an official text.

The full Report is in four main parts. The first is entitled: Czechoslovak Road to Socialism, and traces the history of winning political power, building Socialism, the achievements made, obstacles encountered, and mistakes. From this we print the section on The Leading Role of the Party.

The second part treats The Development of Democracy, and of this we print a considerable part, noting where we have made omissions.

We also print a portion of the third main part—The National Economy and the Standard of Living.

Of the last part, on The Development of Science, Education and Culture, which also contains an important section on Foreign Policy, we have only had space to print the section on The Humanising Mission of Culture.

THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY— A GUARANTEE OF SOCIALIST PROGRESS

AT present it is most important that the Party practises a policy fully justifying its leading role in society. We believe that at present this is a condition for the socialist development of the country.

The Communist Party, as a party of the working class, won the struggle with capitalism and the struggle to carry out revolutionary class changes; with the victory of socialism it becomes the vanguard of the entire socialist society. Especially at the present time the Party has proved its ability to lead this society; on its own initiative it has launched the process of democratisation and ensured its socialist character. In its political activity the Party intends to depend particularly on those who have understanding for the requirements of the society as a whole, who do not see their own personal and group interests against those of socialism, those who use and improve their abilities for the benefit of all, who have a sense of everything new and progressive and are willing to help advance it.

The Communist Party enjoys the voluntary support of the people; it does not practise its leading role by ruling society but by most devotedly serving its free, progressive socialist development. The Party cannot enforce its authority but this must be won again and again by Party activity. It cannot force its line through directives but by the work of its members, by the truth of its ideals.

In the past, the leading role of the Party was often conceived as a monopolistic concentration of power in the hands of Party bodies. This corresponded to the false thesis that the Party is the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This harmful conception weakened the initiative and responsibility of the State, economic and social institutions and damaged the Party's authority, and prevented it from carrying out its real functions. The Party's goal is not to become a universal "caretaker" of society, to bind all organisations and every step taken in life by its directives. Its mission lies primarily in arousing socialist initiative, in showing the ways and actual possibilities of communist perspectives, and in winning over all workers for them through systematic persuasion, as well as by the personal examples of communists. This is determined by the character of Party activity; Party bodies do not deal with all problems but should encourage activity and suggest the solution to the most important ones. At the same time the Party cannot turn into an organisation which would influence society only by its ideas and programme. Through its members and bodies it must develop the practical organisational functions of a political force in society. The political and organisational Party activity co-ordinates the practical efforts of the people to turn the Party line and programme

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into reality in all respects—in the social, economic and cultural life of the society.

As a representative of the interests of the most progressive part of the whole State—and thus also representative of the perspective and aims of society—the Party cannot represent the entire scale of social interests. The political expression of the many-sided interests of the society is the whole National Front, as an expression of the unity of the social strata, groups of interests and of the nations and nationalities of this society. The Party does not want to, and will not take the place of social organisations, but, on the contrary, it must take care that their initiative and political responsibility for the unity of the society is revived and flourishes. The role of the Party is to seek a way of satisfying the various interests that does not jeopardise the perspective and interests of the society as a whole, but which promotes them and create new progressive interests. Party policy must not lead to non-communists getting the impression that their rights and freedom are limited by the role of the Party. On the contrary, they must see in the activity of the Party a guarantee of their rights, freedom and interests. We want, and shall achieve, a state of affairs when the Party, right at basic organisation level, will have informal, natural authority based upon its working and managing ability and the moral qualities of communist functionaries.

Within the framework of democratic rules of a socialist state, communists must over and again strive for the voluntary support of the majority of the people for the Party line. It is necessary to alter Party resolutions and directives if they fail to express correctly the needs and possibilities of the whole of society. The Party must strive for its members—as the most active workers in their spheres of work—to have corresponding weight and influence in the whole of society, to hold functions in State, economic and social bodies. This, however, must not lead to the practice of appointing party members to functions, without regard to the principle that leading representatives of institutions of the whole society are chosen by the society itself and by its various components and that functionaries of these components are responsible to all citizens or to all members of social organisations. It is necessary to abolish the discriminating practice and the creation of a "cadre ceiling" for people not members of the Party.

The basis for the Party's action ability is its ideological and organisational unity based upon broad inner-Party democracy. The most effective weapon against introducing methods of bureaucratic centralism in the Party is the strengthening of the influence of Party members, of forming the political line, reinforcing the role of really democratically elected bodies. Elected bodies of the Party must first of all guarantee the application of all rights of its members, the making of decisions collectively, and, that all power will not be concentrated in a single pair of hands.

Only down-to-earth discussion and exchange of views can be the pre-condition for responsible decisions of collective bodies. Confrontation of views is an essential expression of a multilateral responsible attempt to find the best solution, to advance the new against the obsolete. Each member of the Party and Party bodies has not only the right, but the duty to act according to his conscience, with initiative, criticism, with different views on the matter in question, to oppose any functionary. This practice must become deeply rooted if the Party is to avoid subjectivism in its activity. It is impermissible to restrict communists in these rights, to create an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion of those who voice different opinions, to persecute the minority under any pretext—as has happened in the past. The Party, however, cannot abandon the principle of requiring the fulfilling of resolutions once they are approved. Within the Party, all its members are equal regardless of whether they hold any function in Party bodies or in bodies of State and economic organisations. Nevertheless, he who occupies a higher position, also carries greater responsibility. The Party is aware of the fact that there will be no more profound democracy in this society if democratic principles are not consistently applied in the internal life and work in the Party itself, among communists.

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY, FOR A NEW SYSTEM OF THE POLITICAL MANAGEMENT OF SOCIETY

In the past decade, the Party has many times put forward the demand for a development of socialist democracy. Measures taken by the Party were aimed at enhancing the role of elected representative bodies in the state. They emphasised the importance of voluntary social organisations and of all forms of popular activities. The Party policy initiated a number of laws which increased the protection of rights of every citizen. It was clearly stated in the theses of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia prepared for the 13th Party Congress that "the state of working class dictatorship had fulfilled its main historical mission in our country" and the guide line for further development of our democracy was given no less clearly—"the system of socialist democracy—the state, social organisations, and the Party as the leading force—purposefully endeavours to bring out

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the differing interests and attitudes of working people to social problems in a democratic way and to settle them inside the organisations of socialist society correctly and with regard to nation-wide needs and goals. The development of democracy must proceed hand in hand with the strengthening of a scientific and professional approach to social management."

Nevertheless, *harmful characteristics of decision-making and management by central directive have survived up to the present day*. In relations between the Party, the state, and social organisations, in internal relations and methods within these individual partners, in the relations of state and other institutions to individuals, in the interpretation of the importance of public opinion and of people being informed, in the practical effect of personnel policy—in all these fields there are too many things embittering the life of the people, while obstructing professionally competent and scientific decision-making, and encouraging highhandedness. The reason may be sought, first and foremost, in the fact that these relations in our political system have been built up for years as the instrument for carrying out the orders of the centre, and that this hardly ever made it at all possible for the decision itself to be the outcome of a democratic procedure.

The different interests and needs of people not envisaged by the system of decision-making by directives were taken as an undesirable obstacle and not as new needs of the life of people which have to be respected by politics. That was why the often well-meant words of "an increase in the people's participation in management" could not help as in time this "participation of the people" came to mean chiefly help in carrying out orders and not in settling the correctness of the decisions. Thus it became possible for views, measures and interventions to be enforced that were highhanded and did not comply either with scientific cognition, or with the interests of the various strata of the people and of individuals. Centralised making of decisions carried out in this way could not then be effective either but, on the contrary, led to a number of resolutions not being fulfilled and to the weakening of the purposeful management of social development. This, in turn, has in many cases maintained people in functions who were not capable of any other way of "management", who consistently revived old methods and habits, who surrounded themselves with people who humoured them and not with people whose capacities and characters would be a guarantee of the successful carrying out of the functions. In spite of consistently condemning the "personality cult" we have still not been able, therefore, to eradicate some characteristics of our society that were typical of that period. This undermines the people's confidence in the Party being able to change this situation, and old tensions and political nervous strain are again raised and revived.

The Central Committee is firmly determined to overcome such a state of affairs. As said above, it is necessary to prepare, for the 14th Congress, the fundamental issues of the development of the political system into a concept meeting the demands of life, just as we have elaborated the fundamental concept of the new economic system.

The main thing is to reform the whole political system so that it will permit the dynamic development of socialist social relations, combine broad democracy with scientific, highly qualified management, strengthen the social order, stabilise socialist relations and maintain social discipline. The basic structure of the political system must, at the same time, *provide firm guarantees against a return to the old methods of subjectivism and highhandedness from a position of power*. Party activity has, so far, not been turned systematically to that end, in fact, obstacles have frequently been put in the way of such efforts. All these changes necessarily call for the *beginning of work on a new Czechoslovak Constitution* so that the draft of the new Constitution can be thoroughly discussed among experts and in public on all important points and submitted to the National Assembly shortly after the Party Congress.

But we consider it indispensable to change the present state of things right now, even before the 14th Congress, so that the development of socialism and its inner dynamics are not hampered by outdated factors in the political system. Our democracy must provide more room for the activity of every individual, every collective, every link in the management, both at lower and higher levels, and at the centre, too. People must have more opportunity to think for themselves and to express their opinions. We must radically change the practices that turn the people's initiative and critical comments and suggestions from below into words that meet with the proverbial deaf ear. We must see to it that the incompetent people (ready to adapt themselves to anything) are really replaced by those who strive for socialism, who are concerned with its fate and progress, with the interests and needs of others, and not with their own power of advantages.

This will affect people both "above" and "below". It is going to be a complicated process taking some time. It is necessary to make clear everywhere—at all levels of management, in the Party, in state and economic bodies and in social organisations—which body or which official or which worker is really responsible, and for what, where to look for guarantees of improvement, where to change institutions, where the methods of work, and where to replace individuals. The attitude of individual

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Party officials to new tasks and methods, their capability of carrying the new policy into practice, must be the basic political criterion.

No Responsibility Without Right

Who, which body and which official are responsible for what, what are their rights and duties, must be perfectly clear in all our system of management in the future, and we consider this to be the basic prerequisite for correct development. To this end, each component part should have its own independent position. Substitution and interchanging of state bodies, agencies of economic and social organisations by Party bodies must be completely stopped. Party resolutions are binding for the communists working in these bodies, but the policy, directing activities, and responsibility of the state, economic, and social organisations are independent. The communists active in these bodies and organisations must take the initiative and see that the state and economic bodies as well as social organisations (particularly the Trade Unions, the Czechoslovak Union of Youth, etc.) take the problem of their activities and responsibilities into their own hands.

The whole *National Front*, the political parties which form it, and the social organisations, will take part in the creation of state policy. *The political parties* of the National Front are partners whose political work is based on the joint political programme of the National Front and is naturally bound by the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, is fully based on the socialist character of social relations in our country. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia considers the National Front to be a political platform which does not separate the political parties into government and opposition in the sense that an opposition would be created to state policy as the policy of the whole National Front and as if a struggle were to exist for political power in the state. Possible differences in the viewpoints of individual component parts of the National Front, or divergency of views as to the policy of the state, are all to be settled on the basis of the common socialist conception of the National Front policy by way of political agreement and unification of all component parts of the National Front. The formation of political forces striving to negate this concept of the National Front, to remove the National Front as a whole from political power, was ruled out as long ago as 1945, after the tragic experience of both our nations with the prewar political development of the then Czechoslovak Republic; it is naturally unacceptable to our present Republic.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia considers the *political acceptance* of the Marxist-Leninist concept of the development of socialism as a precondition for the right development of our socialist society. It will assert the Marxist-Leninist concept as the leading political principle in the National Front and in all our political system by seeking, through the means of political work, such support in all the component parts of our system and *directly among the masses of workers and all working people* that will ensure its leading role in a democratic way.

Voluntary social organisations of the working people cannot replace political parties, *but the contrary is also true: political parties in our country cannot exclude organisations which represent the common interest of workers and other working people from directly influencing state policy*, its creation and application. Socialist state power cannot be monopolised either by a single party, or by a coalition of parties. It must be open to all political organisations of the people. *The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia will use every means to develop such forms of political life that will ensure the expression of the direct will of the working class and all working people in the taking of political decisions in our country.*

The whole existing organisation, forms of activities, and incorporation of the various organisations in the National Front, must be revised in principle under the new conditions and built up so that the National Front can carry out its qualitatively new tasks. *The National Front as a whole and all its component parts must be allowed independent rights and their own responsibility for the management of our country and society.*

Voluntary social organisations must be based on really voluntary membership and activity. People join these organisations because they express their interests, therefore they have the right to choose their own officials and representatives who must not be appointed from outside. These principles should be the foundation of our unified mass organisations the activies of which are still indispensable but which should correspond by their structure, their working methods, and their ties with their members, to the new social conditions.

The implementation of *constitutional freedoms of assembly and association* must be ensured this year so that the possibility of setting up voluntary organisations, special-interest associations, societies, etc. is guaranteed by law to meet the actual interests and needs of various strata and categories of our citizens, without bureaucratic interference and without monopoly of any individual organisation. Any restrictions in this respect can be imposed only by law and only the law can stipulate what is anti-social, prohibited or punishable. Freedoms guaranteed by law are applicable in this sense, in compliance with the Constitution, also to citizens of different creeds and religious denominations.

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The effective influence of views and opinions of the working people on all our policy, opposition to all tendencies to suppress the criticism and initiative of the people, cannot be guaranteed if we do not ensure constitutionally based freedom of speech and all political and personal rights of all citizens, systematically and consistently, by all legal means available. *Socialism cannot mean only the liberation of the working people from the domination of exploiting class relations, but it must provide for a fuller life of the individual than any bourgeois democracy.* The working people, who are no longer ordered about by any class of exploiters, can no longer be instructed by any arbitrary interpretation from a position of power, what information they may or may not be given, which of their opinions can or cannot be expressed publicly, where public opinion may play a role and where not. Public opinion polls must be systematically used in preparing important decisions and the main results of the research are to be published. Any restriction can only be imposed on the basis of a law stipulating what is anti-social—which in our country is mainly the criminal law.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia considers it necessary to define more exactly than hitherto in the shortest possible time by a press law, when a state body can forbid the propagation of certain information (in the press, radio, television, etc.) and exclude the possibility of preliminary factual censorship. It is necessary to overcome the holding up, distortion, and incompleteness of information, to remove any unwarranted secrecy of political and economic facts, to publish the annual balance sheets of enterprises, to publish such alternatives to various suggestions and measures, to extend the import and sale of foreign press. Leading representatives of state, social and cultural organisations are obliged to organise regular press conferences and give their views on topical issues on television, radio, and in the press. In the press, it is necessary to make a distinction between official standpoints of state, Party and journalist bodies; the Party press especially must express the Party's own life, development and criticisms of various opinions among the communists, etc., and cannot be made fully identical with the official viewpoints of the State.

The Party realises that ideological opponents of socialism may try to abuse the process of democratisation. At the present stage of development and under the conditions of our country, we insist on the principle that bourgeois ideology can be challenged only in open ideological struggle before all the people. It is possible to win over people for the ideas and policy of the party only by struggle based on the practical activity of communists for the benefit of the people, on truthful and complete information and on scientific analysis. We trust that in such a struggle, all sections of our society will contribute actively towards the victory of truth, which is on the side of socialism.

At present the activity and responsibility of publishing houses, chief editors, of all Party members and the progressive staff of mass communication media, must be extended to further socialist ideals and to put into effect the policy of the Party, of the National Front, and of the State.

Legal norms must guarantee more exactly *the freedom of speech of minority interests and opinions* (again within the framework of socialist laws and in harmony with the principle that decisions are taken in accordance with the will of the majority). The *constitutional freedom of movement* particularly the travelling of our citizens abroad, *must be precisely guaranteed by law;* in particular, this means that a citizen should have the legal right to long-term or permanent sojourn abroad and that people should not be groundlessly placed in the position of emigrants; at the same time it is necessary to protect by law the interests of the state, for example, as regards the drain away of some categories of specialists, etc.

We must gradually solve in the whole legal code the task of how *to protect in a better and more consistent way the personal rights and property of citizens*, we must especially remove those stipulations that virtually put individual citizens at a disadvantage in regard to the state and other institutions. We must in future prevent various institutions from disregarding personal rights and the interests of individual citizens as far as personal ownership of family houses, gardens, etc. is concerned. It will be necessary to adopt, in the shortest possible time, the long-prepared law on compensation for any damage caused to any individual or to an organisation by an unlawful decision of a state organ.

It is a serious fact *that hitherto the rehabilitation of people*—both communists and non-communists—who were the victims of legal violations in the past years, *has not been always carried out with all its political and civic consequences.* On the initiative of the Communist Party Central Committee, an investigation is under way as to why the respective Party resolutions have not been fully carried out, and measures are being taken to ensure that the wrongs of the past are made good wherever this has not yet been done. No one having the slightest personal reason from his own past activity for slowing down the process of rectification may be either in the political bodies, or prosecutor's and court offices that are to rectify the past unlawful deeds.

The Party realises that people unlawfully condemned and persecuted cannot regain the lost years

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of their life; it will, however, do its best to remove any shadow of the mistrust and humiliation to which the families and relatives of those affected were often subjected, and will resolutely ensure that such persecuted people have every opportunity of showing their worth in work, in public life, and in political activities. It goes without saying that even in carrying out the full rehabilitation of people, we cannot change the consequences of revolutionary measures made in the past years in accordance with the spirit of class law aimed against the bourgeoisie, its property, economic, and social supports. The whole problem of a rectification of past repressions must be approached with the full responsibility of the state bodies concerned, and based on legal regulations; the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia supports the proposal that the procedure in these questions and the problems of legal consequences be incorporated in a *special law*.

A wide democratic concept of the *political and personal rights of citizens*, their legal and political safeguards, are considered by the Party to be a prerequisite for the necessary strengthening of social discipline and order, for a stabilisation of socialist social relations. A selfish comprehension of civil rights, an attitude to social property according to the principle "it's not my concern", a preferring of particular interests to those of the whole society—all these are features which communists will oppose with all their might.

The real purpose of democracy must be the achievement of better results of practical work based on wider possibilities of purposeful activity, in order to carry out the interests and needs of the people. Democracy cannot be identified with general speech-making, cannot be understood in opposition to discipline, professionalism, and effectiveness of management. But arbitrariness and obscure stipulation of rights and duties makes such a development impossible. It leads to irresponsibility, to a feeling of uncertainty, and hence also to indifference towards public interests and needs. On the other hand, it is a more profound democracy and its measure of civic freedom that will help socialism to prove its superiority over the limited bourgeois democracy and will make it an attractive example for progressive movements even in industrially advanced countries with democratic traditions.

The Power of Elected Bodies Emanates From the Will of the Voters

[*We omit here an important section on the equality of Czechs and Slovaks and on the rights of minority nationalities.*]

The coming *elections* are to mark the beginning of implementation of the principles of this Action Programme in the work of the elected bodies of the state.

Although efforts were made in the past few months to improve the preparation of elections, it proved that it is not possible to effect the elections in the originally proposed term while meeting the requirements of the principles of advanced socialist democracy. It is therefore necessary to work out an electoral system that will be in harmony with the changes in our political life. By means of the electoral law it is necessary to lay down exactly and clearly the democratic principles for the preparation of the elections, the proposal of candidates and the method of their election. The changes in the electoral system must be based, in particular, on the new political status of the National Front and the elected bodies themselves.

It is the *national committees* that make the backbone of the whole network of representative bodies in our country as democratic organs of state power. It must be in the national committees that state policy is formed, especially in districts and regions. In their work the principle of socialist democracy is to be fully applied: to bring out various interests and requirements of the people and to mould them into the general, public interest of communities, townships, districts, and regions.

The Party regards the national committees as bodies that have to carry on *the progressive traditions of local government and people's self-administration*. They must not be taken for local bureaucratic offices supervising local enterprises. The essential political mission of national committees is to protect the rights and needs of the people, to simplify the process of settling all matters with which the people turn to the national committee, to pursue public interest and oppose the efforts of some institutions to dupe the people and ignore their requirements.

The Party regards the National Assembly as a Socialist Parliament with all the scope of activities the parliament of a democratic republic must have. The communist deputies must see to it that the National Assembly works out a number of concrete measures before the new electoral period that will put into actual practice the constitutional status of the National Assembly as the supreme organ of state power in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. It is necessary to overcome formalism in behaviour, the unconvincing unanimity concealing real differences in opinions and attitudes of the deputies. From this point of view it is necessary to solve, in the nearest future, the relations between the National Assembly and Party bodies, and also a number of problems of internal activities of the National Assembly, particularly those concerning organisation and competence.

The result must be a National Assembly which actually decides on laws and important political

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issues, and not only approves proposals submitted. The Party supports a strengthening of the controlling function of the National Assembly in our entire public life and, more concretely, in respect of the government; from that point of view, it is necessary to subject the controlling machinery fully to the National Assembly, to establish it as its own body. Together with closer bonds between the National Assembly and our public opinion, all this can, in a short time, increase the role and the prestige of the National Assembly in our society.

Division and Supervision of Power—Guarantees against Highhandedness

The communists in the government, too, must ensure as soon as possible that the principle of responsibility of the government towards the National Assembly covering all its activities is worked out in detail. Even under the existing practice of political management, the opportunity afforded for independent activity of the government and of individual ministers was not sufficiently made use of, there was a tendency to shift responsibility on to the Party bodies and to evade independence in taking decisions. The government is not only an organ of economic policy. As the supreme executive organ of the state it must, as a whole, deal systematically with the whole scope of political and administrative problems of the state. It is also up to the government to take care of the rational development of the whole state machinery.

The state administration machinery was often underrated in the past; this machinery must consist of highly qualified people, professionally competent and rationally organised; it must be subject to a systematic supervision in a democratic way, it must be effective. Simplified ideas that such goals could be attained by underrating and decrying the administrative machinery in general, were detrimental in the past.

In the whole state and political system it is necessary to create, purposefully, such relations and rules that will, on the one hand, provide *the necessary safeguards to professional officials* in their functions and, on the other hand, enable *the necessary replacement of officials* who can no longer cope with their work by professionally and politically more competent people. This means to establish legal conditions for the recall of responsible officials and to provide legal guarantees of decent conditions for those who are leaving their posts by the normal way of replacement, so that their departure should not amount to a "drop" in their material and moral-political standing.

The Party policy is based on the principle that no undue concentration of power must occur, throughout the state machinery, in one sector, one body, or in a single individual. It is necessary to provide for such a division of power and such a system of mutual supervision that any faults or encroachments in any of its links are rectified in time, by the activities of another link. This principle must be applied not only to relations between the elected and executive bodies, but also to the inner relations of the state administration machinery and to the standing and activities of courts of law.

This principle is infringed mainly by undue concentration of duties in the existing Ministry of the Interior. The Party thinks it necessary to make of it a Ministry for Internal State Administration including the administration of public security. Responsibilities in our state that were traditionally within the jurisdiction of other bodies and with the passage of time have been incorporated into the Ministry of the Interior, must be withdrawn from it. It is necessary to elaborate proposals as soon as possible passing on the main responsibility for investigation to the Courts of Law, separating prison administration from the security force, and the handing over of press law administration, of archives, etc. to other state bodies.

The Party considers the problem of a correct incorporation of the security force in the state as politically very important. The security of our lives will only benefit, if everything is eliminated that helps to maintain a public view of the security force marred by the past period of violations of law and by the privileged position of the security force in the political system. That past period impaired the progressive traditions of our security force as a force advancing side by side with our people. These traditions must be renewed. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia deems it necessary *to change the organisation of the security force* and to split the joint organisation into two mutually independent parts—State Security and Public Security. *The State Security* service must have such a status, organisational structure, numerical state, equipment, methods of work, and qualifications that are in keeping with its work of defending the state from the activities of enemy centres abroad. Every citizen who has not been culpable in this respect must know with certainty that his political convictions and opinions, his personal beliefs and activities, cannot be the object of attention of the bodies of the State Security service. The Party declares clearly that this apparatus *should not be directed and used to solve internal political questions* and controversies in socialist society.

The Public Security service will fulfil tasks of combating crime and of the protection of public order; to this its organisation, numerical state, and methods of work must be adapted. The Public Security force must be better equipped and strengthened; its

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functions in the defence of public order must be exactly laid down by law and, in their fulfilment, the service will be directed by the national committees. Legal norms must create clearer relations of control over the security force by the government as a whole and by the National Assembly.

It is necessary to devote the appropriate care to carrying out *the defence policy in our state*. In this connection it is necessary to work for our active share in the conception of the military doctrine of the Warsaw Treaty countries, the strengthening of the defence potential of our country in harmony with its needs and possibilities, a uniform complex understanding of the questions of defence with all problems of the building of socialism in the whole of our policy, including defence training.

The legal policy of the Party is based on the principle that in a dispute over right (including administrative decisions of state bodies) the basic guarantee of legality is proceedings in Court which are independent of political factors and are bound only by law. The application of this principle requires a strengthening of the whole social and political role and importance of courts of law in our society. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia will see to it that work on the complex of the required proposals and measures proceeds so as to find the answer to all the necessary problems before the next election of judges. In harmony with and parallel to that, it is also necessary to solve the status and duties of the public prosecutor's office so that it may not be put above the Courts of Law, and to guarantee full independence of barristers and solicitors from state bodies.

Youth and its Organisation

We regard young people as those who will continue the socialist transformation of the society. The present political activity and the part young people take in the social process of revitalisation proves that the reproaches often addressed against them are without any foundation. The decisive part of the working and student youth is, by its energy, critical approach, matter-of-factness, and initiative a natural ally and important factor in the creation and implementation of the programmed aims of the Party. For this reason, it is indispensable *to open wide and confidently the doors of our Party to young people*.

At the same time it is necessary to give young people of all social categories, in proportion to their age and abilities, full possibility of co-deciding on all their own and public matters in elected bodies; their organisations should be recognised as partners of Party and social organisations, economic bodies, national committees, and administration of schools in solving social, working, study, and other urgent problems of youth and children. Young people must be given the opportunity of using their knowledge, qualifications, and talents in appropriate places including leading positions. Cultural, sporting and recreation facilities must be built with their co-operation for them to spend their leisure in a healthy and effective way. The work of voluntary and professional trainers, coaches, instructors, and other workers who sacrifice their time and devote their abilities to children and youth as socially highly beneficial and praiseworthy must be appreciated.

In this connection. let us say *a few words of self-criticism on the relations of the Party and the Czechoslovak Union of Youth*. Until recently, we expected the latter or its representatives to pass on to the young people more or less ready-made instructions, often the result of subjective opinions, which tactlessly interfered with the internal affairs of the youth organisation. We did not sufficiently influence young communists to take part in the creation of Party policies by making them consistently defend, develop, and express the interests, needs, requirements, and view-points of the youth as a whole and of its individual categories. Thus the initiative of the youth and the role of its organisation was impaired in public and political life. This tendency was strengthed by the incorrect principle of direct Party control of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth.

However, the independence of the youth and children's movement does not eliminate, but in fact presupposes ideological guiding, a systematic interest of the whole Party in the problems of youth and of children's education, the practical help of communists to children's and youth collectives and tactful attention to young people in everyday life.

[*We omit here a short section on the future organisation of youth and students.*]

THE NATIONAL ECONOMY AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING

The 13th Congress approved conclusions stating that the improvement of our economy and the transition to intensive economic development cannot be achieved by traditional approaches to partial improvements of the directive system of management and planning by directives, but by a basic change of the mechanism of socialist economy. The idea which prevailed was the idea of an economic reform based on a new economic system, the revival of the positive functions of the socialist market, the necessary structural changes of the economy, and a profound change in the role of the economic plan which would cease to be an instrument for issuing orders and would become an instrument enabling society to find the most suitable long-range trends of its development by scientific methods; a change from an instrument designed to enforce subjectively

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determined material proportions into a programme of economic policy, ensuring an effective development of economy and the growth of the standard of living. The implementation of the first important step of the economic reform has met with the active support of the working people, experts and the broad public.

Certain features of the economic development over the past two years, better utilisation of production factors, the drop of the share of material costs in the social product, the growing demands placed by consumers on the technical level and the quality of products etc., fully confirm the correctness of the conclusions adopted by the 13th Congress. These positive features of the economic development have not so far resulted in a better satisfaction of the needs of society and have not led to reducing the tension on the internal market. This is objectively caused by the fact that the former tendencies are still strongly apparent, that the old structure of production and foreign trade still survives and that production is being only slowly adapted to the changes and the growing demand of the market. This is connected with many inconsistencies and gaps in implementing the programme of economic reform.

Instead of a consistent effort to establish more objective market criteria which would expose the economic backwardness and old distortions of the economic structure and gradually eliminate their existence, there are still considerable efforts to deform these criteria, to adapt them to the given conditions and thus create an easy situation in which the backwardness and the deformations would remain concealed, could survive and thrive at the expense of us all.

The system of protection applied with regard to economic backwardness, connected with the policy of prices, subsidies and grants and mainly with the system of surcharges in foreign trade continues to prevail in the economic policy. The confused system of protection is creating conditions under which ineffective backward enterprises, managed in an inexpert way, may exist and are often given preferences. *It is not possible to continue to impede economic policy by taking from those who work well and giving to those who work badly.* It is therefore necessary to objectivise value relations so that the differences in the income situation between enterprises should really reflect actual differences in the level of their economic activities. *Nor is it politically correct for the consumer to pay indefinitely for inefficiency by means of prices, taxes and indirectly by different forms of siphoning off the means of effective enterprises.*

Enterprises facing market demands must be given a free hand in making decisions on all questions concerning directly the management of the enterprise and its economy and must be allowed to react in a creative way to the needs of the market. Market demands, together with the economic policy, will thus put pressure on production to become more effective and to introduce healthy structural changes. Economic competition, especially with advanced foreign firms, must be the basic stimulus for improving production and reducing costs. This competition cannot be replaced by subjective adjustments of economic conditions and by directive orders of superior bodies.

Socialism Cannot do Without Enterprises

The programme of democratisation of the economy links the economic reform more closely with the processes facing us in the sphere of politics and the general management of society, and stimulates the determination and application of new elements which will develop the economic reform still further. *The programme of democratisation of the economy includes particularly measures to ensure the independence of enterprises and enterprise groupings and their relative independence from state bodies, a full and real implementation of the right of the consumer to determine his consumption and his style of life, the right of a free choice of working activity, the right and real possibility of different groups of the working people and different social groups to formulate and defend their economic interests in shaping the economic policy.*

In developing democratic relations in the economy we at present consider as the most important task the final formulation of the economic position of enterprises, their authority and responsibility.

Economic reform will increasingly put whole working teams of socialist enterprises into positions in which they will feel directly the consequences of both the good and bad management of enterprises. The Party therefore deems it necessary that the whole working team which bears the consequences should also be able to influence the management of the enterprise. The need arises of democratic bodies in enterprises with specified rights towards the management of the enterprise. Managers and head executives of enterprises, which would also appoint them to their functions, would be accountable to these bodies for the overall results of their work. These bodies must become a direct part of the managing mechanism of enterprises, and not a social organisation (they cannot therefore be identified with trade unions). These bodies would be formed by elected representatives of the working team and by representatives of certain bodies outside the enterprise ensuring the influence of the interests of the whole of society and an expert and qualified level of decision-making; the representation of these bodies must also be subordinated to democratic

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forms of control. At the same time it is necessary to define the degree of responsibility of these bodies for the results of the management of socialist property. In the spirit of these principles it is important to solve many concrete questions; at the same time it will be necessary to propose a statute for these bodies and to use certain traditions of our works councils from the years 1945-48 and experiences in modern enterprises.

This naturally in no way reduces the indivisible authority and responsibility of the leading executives in managing the enterprise which, together with their qualifications and managing abilities, is the basic pre-condition of successful enterprises.

In this connection it is also necessary to reassess the present role of trade unions. In the centralised system, their function of supporting directive management combined with defending the interests of the working people. Moreover, they also performed certain state functions (labour legislation etc.). The resulting situation was that on the one side they took inadequate care of the interests of the working people and on the other they were accused of "protection". Even socialist economy places working people into a position in which it is necessary to defend human, social and other interests in an organised way. The central function of trade unions should be to defend with increasing emphasis employment and working conditions of the workers and the working people, to act in this respect as an important partner in solving all questions of economic management; on this basis, the trade unions would also develop more effectively their function of organizing workers and employees for a positive solution of the problems of socialist construction and their educational function connected therewith. Communists in trade unions will proceed from these principles and take the initiative in ensuring that the trade unions themselves analyse their position, the functions and activities of the central and union bodies on the basis of the whole Action Programme of the Party, that they evaluate the internal life of trade unions as independent democratic organisations and work out their own political line in solving these questions.

[*We omit here a section developing problems of the organisation of enterprises and of agriculture.*]

A serious shortcoming existing in economic life over a long period of time is the low standard and shortage of services of all sorts which reduces the standard of living and arouses justified discontent among the population. The improvement of communal services (water, gas, sewerage, municipal transport, road cleaning etc.) will require considerable investment and can be achieved only gradually while ensuring their profitability. The unsatisfactory state existing in other services is caused by the method of their organisation and their exacting administration, by low interest of the workers in their economic results, by the fact that certain services are unprofitable, by bad supply of material and low and wrong investments.

Neither the standard of productive forces, nor the character of work in services, repairs and artisan production correspond to the present high centralisation in their management and organisation which involves quite unnecessary administration and burdens the services with inexpedient costs. This is why it is necessary to take immediate measures for improving and extending all existing forms of services (co-operatives, communal enterprises), to simplify their management and organisation in the spirit of the principles of the new system. In the sphere of services it is particularly correct to make individual shops independent and to remove unnecessary administrative links of management. Small-scale individual enterprising is also justified in the sphere of services. In this respect it is necessary to work out legal provisions concerning small-scale enterprising, which would help fill the existing gap in our market.

The Role of the State in the Economy

The expansion of social wealth is the concern of our entire society. The actual tasks and responsibility fall both on enterprises and on managing bodies, particularly on the Government. It is therefore their common interest and task to make use of the growing political activity of the working people, which has been taking place since the December and January Plenums of the Central Committee, and to win them over for the road which means the consolidation of the national economy.

To achieve this it is necessary to adjust the whole organisation of the implementation of the economic policy of the state. The appropriate organisational questions must be solved by State and economic bodies. At the same time the Party considers it desirable that the final set up should correspond to the following principles:

Decision-making about the plan and the economic policy of the State must be both a process of mutual confrontation and harmonisation of different interests —i.e. the interests of enterprising, consumers, employees, different social groups of the population, nations etc.—and a process of a suitable combination of view of the long-term development of the economy and its immediate prosperity. Effective measures protecting the consumer against the abuse of the monopoly position and economic power of production and trading enterprises must be considered as a necessary part of the economic activity of the State.

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The drafting of the national economic plan and the national economy policy must be subject to the democratic control of the National Assembly and specialised control of scientific institutions. The supreme body implementing the economic policy of the State is the Government. This presupposes an institutional organisation of central management which would make it possible in the process of decision-making to express and unify special interests and views and to harmonise, in the implementation of the economic policy, the operation of individual economic instruments and measures of the State. At the same time, the institutional organisation of the bodies of economic management must not provide opportunities for the assertion of departmental and monopoly interests and must ensure a marked superiority of the interests of citizens as consumers and sovereign bearers of the economic movement.

In all central economic bodies it is indispensable to ensure a high level of specialisation, rationalisation and modernisation of managing work, to which the necessary changes in cadres must be also subordinated. All this must be the concern of a group of government bodies which analyse the national economy, work on alternative solutions of this development and the national economic plan, compare the planned development with the real development in the market, and proceeding from these findings, take effective economic measures etc., and thus consistently and purposefully influence the real movement in the economic sphere (i.e. the activity of enterprises and their associations) in the direction outlined by the economic policy of the State. State bodies approach enterprises and their associations and integrated groups in the same way as they approach other independent legal subjects. The means which are at the disposal of the State, are the result of the work of all the people and must be used for satisfying the needs of the entire society in a way which society recognises to be reasonable and useful. An important part of economic management must be a well conceived technical policy based on the analysis of technical progress in the whole world and on own conceptions of economic development. The purpose of this policy will be to regulate the technical level of the production base and to create economic conditions which will arouse strong interest in seeking and using the most up-to-date technology.

In this connection it would be useful for the State bodies concerned to examine all kinds of public expenditure and for the Government to work out a programme of State and public measures designed to reduce expenditure. The State budget must become an instrument for restoring the equilibrium and not for its weakening. The Central Committee considers it necessary and possible to reveal and reasonably utilise extraordinary internal and external resources for achieving a speedy restoration of the economic equilibrium.

At the same time, the Central Committee appeals to all enterprises, their associations, plants and workshops to work out and implement, in connection with their enhanced economic authority, a programme of rationalisation of all managing, productive and businees activity, in order to achieve a concerted harmonisation of work and to reduce production costs. The programme of rationalisation is the precondition for an economic evaluation of existing capacities and for technical modernisation of production.

We are putting great hope into reviving the positive functions of the market as a necessary mechanism of the functioning of socialist economy and of checking whether the work in enterprises has been expended in a socially useful way. However, we have in mind not the capitalist, but the socialist market, and not its uncontrolled but its regulated utilisation. The plan and the national economic policy must appear as a positive force contributing to the normalisation of the market and directed against tendencies of economic imbalance and against monopolistic control of the market. Society must do the planning with due insight and perspective, it must scientifically discover the possibilities of its future development and choose its most reasonable orientation. This, however, cannot be achieved by suppressing the independence of other subjects of the market (enterprises and the population), since this would on the one hand undermine the interest ensuring economic rationality, on the other hand it would distort information and decision-making processes which are indispensably necessary for the functioning of the economy.

The economic structure of Czechoslovakia, its technical standard, concentration and specialisation must be developed in a way enabling it to react quickly to economic changes at home and in the world.

The level of the adaptibility and flexibility of the national economy is also the result of the skill and the technical and cultural standard of the working people, their ability to adapt themselves quickly to the changing technical and economic conditions of production. From the point of view of the resources of economic growth in Czechoslovakia, manpower, its abilities and quality, technical and cultural standard as well as their adaptibility and mobility are of quite exceptional importance. Even from the point of view of future economic growth, the Czechoslovak economy possesses no more promising resources than its great human resources. Czech and Slovak workers and farmers have always been

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known for their know-how, their skill and creative approach to work. As a result of the directive method of management, the new generation has only partly taken over these qualities from the older generation. Instead of the feeling of satisfaction from well done work, there frequently developed indifference, mechanical fulfilment of tasks, and resignation to situations caused by incompetent and uninitiative management. The Party believes that the prime condition for eliminating these losses is to put into leading positions people who are really capable and who are able to secure natural authority in working teams by their professional and human level.

[*We omit here sections on the International Division of Labour, on Problems of Living Standards, and on the Rational Utilisation of the Resources of Slovakia.*]

THE HUMANISTIC MISSION OF CULTURE

[*This section is in the fourth part of the Programme which deals with the Development of Science Education and Culture. It is preceded by sections on Science and Education and followed by a section on foreign policy.*]

The development of culture in the broadest sense is one of the basic conditions of dynamic and harmonious development of socialist society. The culture of socialist Czechoslovakia consists of independent and equal Czech and Slovak cultures, together with the cultures of the other nationalities. The arts and culture are not a mere decoration of economic and political life, but they are vital for the socialist system. If culture lags behind, it retards the progress of policy and economy, democracy and freedom, development of man and human relations. *Care for culture, material and spiritual, is not only the concern of the cultural front, but it must become an affair of the entire society.*

It was an important tradition of the Communist Party from the start that it was able to unite the best men of culture and art around itself. This is proved not only by the socialist orientation of our pre-war artistic vanguard, but also by the fact that most of the cultural intelligentsia were standing on the left or were in the ranks of the Party after the liberation in 1945. Later, especially in the early fifties, certain representatives of culture were discriminated against, some were subjected to unjustified political repression.

The documents of the 13th Congress should have been a starting point of a new cultural policy, which would have proceeded from the best traditions of the past and from much positive experience acquired after 1956 and after the 12th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. However, the surviving bureaucratic attitudes and old methods of management prevented the initiatives of the Congress from developing. The contradictions between proclaimed and practised policies created a conflict and tension and restricted the involvement and development of socialist culture. The Central Committee will investigate all the reasons for these conflicts and will create favourable conditions to normalise the situation.

We reject administrative and bureaucratic methods of implementing cultural policy, we dissociate ourselves from them and we shall oppose them. Artistic work must not be subjected to censorship. We have full confidence in men of culture and we expect their responsibility, understanding and support. We appreciate how the workers in culture helped force through and create the humanist and democratic character of socialism and how actively they participated in eliminating the retarding factors of its development.

It is necessary to overcome a narrow understanding of the social and human function of culture and art, over-estimation of their ideological and political role and underestimation of their basic general cultural and aesthetic tasks in the transformation of man and his world.

The Party will guard and safeguard both the freedom of artistic work and the right to make works of art accessible.

To socially administer culture means, first of all, to create favourable conditions for its development. Disputes, which will naturally arise, will be solved by discussion and democratic decisions. *Independent decisions* of cultural workers in the spheres of their activity must also be an expression of the necessary autonomy of culture and art. They must be indispensable partners for state bodies. We are convinced that communist intellectuals and all other leading workers in the sphere of culture and art are capable of co-operating in the formation of, and carrying out responsibility and independently, the policy of the Party in state, social, cultural and group-interest institutions, that they are a guarantee of the socialist, humanistic orientation of our culture.

Of course, the social effect of culture does not occur outside the political context. We shall ensure that the freedom of different views, guaranteed by the Constitution, is fully respected. However the Communist Party cannot give up its role of inspiring people, its efforts that art, too, should efficiently help form socialist man in the struggle for the transformation of the world. The Party will apply consistently its political programme, it will stimulate the development of Marxist thinking.

Socialist culture is one of the primary agents of the penetration of socialist and humanistic ideas in the world. *It helps unite the humanistic streams of world culture. It has the capacity of bringing closer the socialist nations and of strengthening the co-operation and fraternal relations of nations and nationalities.*

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Culture is a traditionally important value for our nations, by the means of which we have always proved our vitality and individuality to the world. But the interpretation of the national traditions of the culture of the Czechs and Slovaks was one-sided in many respects, whole important periods were artificially omitted from it. We give our full backing to the humanist traditions of national cultures and we shall support all efforts to endorse this heritage in the present psychology of Czechs and Slovaks.

We are supporters of both internationalism and national specificity of culture. We think it inevitable to take efficient measures without delay so that culture in Slovakia has the same conditions and possibilities as those in Bohemia, so that disproportions do not grow, but disappear. *The equal position of national cultures* also requires an equal position of national institutions. The competence of national bodies in Slovakia includes the management of the decisive instruments of national culture, such as radio, television, film, scientific institutes, artists' unions, book publishing, care for historical monuments, etc. It is necessary to secure the representation of Slovak national culture abroad; to increase the exchange of information and cultural values between the Czechs and Slovak nations; to ensure the cultural life of the Slovaks in the Czech lands and of the Czechs in Slovakia in their native tongue.

Similar principles must be applied also towards the cultures of all the nationalities in Czechoslovakia, while realising that they are specific cultures and not Czech and Slovak culture translated into another language. *The culture of nationalities* is an organic part of Czechoslovak socialist culture, but it is also in the context with the general culture of its own nation, with which it is inseparably linked. Material conditions and personnel problems of the further development of national cultures must be guaranteed institutionally, scientific and cultural institutions and offices must be established with a view to nationality needs. The decisive role and care for the material base of national cultures pertains to state bodies, National Committees, together with the cultural unions of the various nationalities.

We shall take care not only of cultural work, but also of the system of *communication of cultural values*, we shall strive for the active participation of citizens in the development of socialist culture and in their *cultural education*, in the closest possible co-operation and complex influence of mass and local culture. We consider it urgent to examine the reasons of the catastrophic shortcomings of cultural and aesthetic education and to take measures to rectify them;—to create sufficient material, organisations and other conditions of cultural activity, *to loosen the organisational forms;*—to allow the establishment of various cultural and hobby groups as well as their regional and national associations;—to complete an efficient network of cultural establishments with an active participation of National Committees, enterprises, social and group-interest organisations;—to purposefully build up new important *regional cultural centres* in addition to the capitals.

The entire sphere of culture must be decently and responsibly secured economically in view of its importance, and protected from the uncontrolled nature of the market and from commercialism. We shall recommend, in the spirit of the 13th Congress resolution, that the government should complete without delay the planned *solution of the entire complex of culture economy*. The planned expenditure on culture must be stabilised and must increase progressively in harmony with the trend of the national income. We shall also support voluntary combination of the means of industrial and agricultural enterprises, national committees and social organisations for culture. The means invested in culture can become an important instrument of its development, if he, who uses them, becomes a modern socialist customer.

We regard the *following problems* as the *most urgent* ones, dependent upon new distribution of the means for culture on a national scale: to guarantee material care for the creators of important cultural values;—to eliminate discrepancies in the royalties, wages, incomes and taxes system in culture;— to cover the whole territory of the Republic with a good-quality radio and television service as soon as possible, to open the second television programme in 1970;—to overcome without delay the disastrous state of polygraphy;—to secure more polygraphic paper in desirable assortment for the press and publishing houses;—to improve care of historical objects of art and save handicraft among other things by making way for co-operative or private enterprise in this sphere.

The planned expenditure on culture must *be concentrated in culture directing bodies* which must distribute it to cultural institutions. To increase the economic independence and responsibility of cultural establishments, enterprises and groups is a prerequisite of the functioning economy of culture. Independent control will lead towards a more rational exploitation of means and possibilities, towards increasing the spirit of enterprise.

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Discussion Contributions on:

Questions of Educational Policy

Eric Chapman

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IT is not uncommon for questions of educational policy to appear in the news, and not only as a result of the impact of the current wave of economic restrictions.

The *Morning Star* of Thursday January 4th had several interesting reports relating to a variety of aspects of education policy, containing some very pertinent comments.

For example Dr. R. C. Beeby calls for reform and research into the role of education. Mr. L. Curry of the Assistant Masters Association describes headmastership as a survival of Victorian individualism, and Miss Joan Lester, MP, correctly reminds us that under capitalist regimes educational advance has always been resisted under a variety of excuses.

It is indeed significant that so much remains to be understood about the function, purpose, and the objectives of education in all its aspects, and it is a good sign that such questioning is taking place. Surely Marxists today, in the context of the 50th anniversary of the Soviet Revolution, should be in a postion to make their own distinctive contributions to these discussions.

The Aims of Education

Dr. Beeby expressed concern that ". . . the ultimate goals of education are less clearly defined than those of most professions . . . until someone tells the teachers the kind of world for which they are to prepare their pupils, only the boldest will dare to leave the trodden path" . . . and added the comment that education is planned, not by teachers, but by economists, sociologists, and a few professors of education. This he suggests is a quite unsatisfactory attitude to the problems of preparing the young for the rapidly changing conditions of human relations that are developing. We must however go more deeply into the reasons why such thinking is not followed up by all those concerned directly or indirectly with education.

Dr. Leach, in his Reith Lectures, has also challenged the ingrained attitudes which are taken for granted as part of the established tradition, and therefore of education. While in the past 50 years or so there has been a big quantitative growth of education, there has not been a corresponding qualitative development; indeed in many ways the quality in respect of education for social responsibility has deteriorated in my opinion. It is usually taken for granted that all education is intrinsically good and socially beneficial, and yet it is quite common to meet individuals who have acquired very high levels of university education and who are motivated by no other consideration than the exploitation of their educational advantage to get the maximum amount of money and social privilege for themselves, regardless of any social morality or ethics. To quote Dr. Leach again, "Only a tiny minority thinks of education as a means by which individuals are given human interests and values so that they can fit together in the social jig-saw of society: for the most of us education is an instrument of war, a weapon by which the individual beats down his competitors and defends himself against adversity. . . . If we are to produce adults who are inspired by an ethic of co-operation rather than an ethic of fratricide, then we must start by devising a school system in which the passing of competitive examinations . . . ceases to be part of the exercise."

The acceptance of the principle of comprehensive education is of course a most important step forward, but it will only succeed in so far as it is properly organised and financed on the basis of socially progressive policies, in particular to consciously prepare for an accelerated growth of democratic participation and for balanced integration of the individual into his social relationships. Furthermore it is very questionable indeed whether this policy can succeed adequately without properly organised preschool and nursery activity, these aspects which are of vital importance in these days of small families and ever increasing urbanisation and tall blocks of flats.

There is certainly an ample basis for research in these fields by studying the experiences of the socialist countries, apart from other opportunities. My own impression of education in the German

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Democratic Republic is that character development and consciousness of social responsibility are introduced much more naturally and produce much more successful results than for example in Britain, because so much care and emphasis is placed on these aspects right from the earliest age. Surely the absence of pre-school education and activity goes a long way towards laying the basis for anti-social, sort-it-out-yourself-regardless attitude, instead of the child being given conditions in which it will learn to live co-operatively with an infinite variety of other human beings, making its own contribution to the solutions of the many problems involved.

The organisation of many educational establishments does indeed bear the hallmark of Victorian individualism or, one might add, even of feudal autocracy. How can young people be expected to grow up with a healthy respect for democratic relationships if in the very institutes responsible for their educational development it becomes only too obvious that kow-towing and sycophancy are the main factors of success? Likewise many aspects of the examination system tend to consolidate educational achievement as a purely personal accomplishment, a mark of personal distinction and enterprise rather than a tribute to social effort with a positive social purpose. It is also true that autocratic headmasters resist the introduction of the most modern methods and ideas, with the most devastating results both on the children and the enthusiasm of young teachers, and therefore of the educational atmosphere. This would be much less likely in a more democratic and less authoritarian mode of organisation.

Consider also Dr. Beeby's remark: "Until someone tells the teachers the kind of world for which they are to prepare their pupils. . . ."

Problems of What to Teach

Surely most teachers have "got the message" about the kind of world envisaged on behalf of their pupils, and usually the more sensitive ones are repelled at the prospects. It is above all round this point that socialists, Marxists, and progressives generally must develop a more positive attitude of struggle, and where parents must become involved. Many individual teachers of course do their best, in spite of everything, but the situation requires a campaign for a much more organised and systematic acceptance of progressive principles in order to bring about a qualitative change of attitude towards such fundamentals as democracy, peace, and socialism, economics and humanism.

Why should we continue to accept the situation in which it would appear unnatural for young people to be taught objectively about the great ideas of the contemporary world, including the ideas of Marx and Engels? Surely it is high time that such ideas became the subject of "respectable" and honest study, at least as important as the works of Darwin? Also, why should there be such a total domination of ethical, philosophical and moral education by the various interpretations of Christianity, so that other philosophical and moral concepts are almost totally neglected as far as basis education is concerned? Until such changes of attitude are brought about, it is unlikely that, however much quantitative development takes place it will have anything but a secondary or accidental stimulus to democratic progress. In fact the opposite may well be true. The rapidly changing world and its dangers press far too heavily for this attitude to be tolerated. But, to be realistic, under capitalism no one is likely to tell the teachers to work along these lines! Equally, so long as we have the vestiges of democracy, it is unlikely that teachers will be told categorically that they must not work in this way. Thus, because we have a measure of democracy, there is some scope for teachers themselves to exercise some influence providing they can overcome the internal inertia of the education system itself. This also calls for initiative and involvement on the part of both parents and students.

Educational Planning

On the question of educational planning, it is obvious that economists must be involved, but the question must be asked: *how* are they involved? It is one thing to study the economics of a basic decision to raise the school-leaving age, and it is another thing to ask the economist whether such an extension can be justified on purely economic grounds. We must break away from the idea that education can only be justified on the basis of earning power. In the rapidly changing world of today, and more so of tomorrow, the viability of democracy depends upon every citizen, *however humble his vocation*, being concerned with the solutions of problems of the most profound character. How many people today are sufficiently informed to have a worth-while opinion on such problems as London's third airport, problems of racial integration, urbanisation of S.E. England, population growth, water and air pollution, the use and misuse of drugs and chemicals and motor cars or nuclear energy?

These and many other problems will keep on coming on to the agenda of the forum of democracy. In so far as individual citizens fail to be intelligently concerned with such problems the way is opened for bureaucracy, expertocracy, and vested interests, i.e. for a negation of democracy. So if we are serious about the democratic basis of *The British Road to Socialism* we must never relax in our fight for the maximum rate of increase of educational opportunity, realising that whatever the cost involved it is

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of far greater relevance to the happiness, and, indeed, the survival, of the young generation whom we claim to serve than all the money directed towards paralysing the inevitable growth of socialist influences, i.e. the cold war in all its aspects.

Surely, too, is it not becoming only all too obvious that the rapid rate of technical and social change demand that individuals are adequately equipped by way of their basic education to become much more highly adaptable. Is it not time to start thinking along the lines that selections for a life-long career has little more merit than the 11-plus or 13-plus?

Why should it be so exceptional for the individual to change from one vocation to another because of a decision made in his youth? It is my guess that before many more years have passed, it will be shown that one of the most important results of the liberal educational policies in the socialist countries will in fact be the extent of personal flexibility in respect of vocation and career. There are many important examples even today which illustrate this trend. But it would be harmful to think that we must wait for a socialist revolution before we are able to initiate any parallel progress. On the contrary, struggle for clarification of thought and policy on these issues will help towards an understanding of what socialism is all about, on the other hand it would of course be impractical and dangerous to think that such far-reaching changes of attitude could be brought about too quickly. What is important is to work steadily and consistently for a general understanding of the direction indicated by objective socially determined requirements, so that we can shorten the period of time required to overcome the taboos which hold back much of the necessary social understanding, within and without the profession.

Responsibility of the Teachers

So I would strongly contest the proposition that it is for "someone" to tell the teachers where the future lies, but for society as a whole, with teachers taking a leading role, to work for a more completely honest attitude to life's problems and the possible solutions. As things stand the educational attitude to the young generation is (no doubt with the best of intentions) rather like launching someone on a most complicated journey and deliberately providing a map from which some of the most important areas of exploration have been consciously left blank or, even worse, confused.

No wonder that for many young people its appeal is limited and qualified, and that it is accepted by many not as a stimulating preparation for life, but as an imposition, received in ill grace, or at least with poor enthusiasm. Such important social phenomena cry out for a more profound and sustained examination, and not least from those claiming to be socialists and Marxists.

Problems of Local Government

Dave Grove

IN his comprehensive review of local government problems and prospects (March) Bert Ward comes out in favour of eight big regions rather than 40 or 50 city regions. I wonder if the arguments for this conclusion are as convincing as he thinks.

There is general agreement that for the sake of both democracy and efficiency we need major local authorities with larger areas and more rational boundaries than any of the existing ones. I would add the proposition that their areas should be no bigger than is necessary for efficiency, because the more councils there are the more people will be drawn into local government and the closer they will be to their constituents. If this is accepted, the main question is whether city regions would be big enough for efficiency.

Bert Ward thinks not. Before coming to the main argument, I would like to answer one curious question he poses: "If Scotland and Wales are obvious candidates for more autonomy, then what would be the argument for discriminating against the English regions?" The argument would be simply that Scotland and Wales are *nations*; not even Dan Smith claims this status for the English regions!

Planning: Regional or National?

The nub of the argument seems to lie in Ward's assertion that "elected regional councils will provide suitable bodies for economic planning within the region." But is *economic* planning really possible at the regional level in a country as small and close-knit as ours? Industry is increasingly dependent on national linkages. A typical engineering factory, for instance, draws its input from several regions and sends its output all over the country. In both nationalised and private industries investment decisions are more and more made for economic units covering the whole of Britain. Surely the transition to socialism will increase this tendency. We may envisage a system with considerable de-

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centralisation of power to enterprises and localities, but will this work except in the context of a strong *national* plan?

In the field of *physical* planning too, there are many strategic decisions that must surely be made at the national level, e.g. the general line of motorways, the location of international airports and of major investments in seaports and railways. The problem of regional planning is mainly one of allocating investment *between* regions, and this can only be done by the central government. Given a firm national framework, most other decisions could be left to areas as small as city regions, including quite big decisions such as the location of new towns and new universities.

As for the *operation* of local government services, are there any that need a bigger area of population than most of the city regions would have? Water supply, perhaps, but this might have to be nationalised. Are not city regions in the main big enough to plan and operate the main local government services —education, environmental health, highways and bridges, open spaces—and to run new ones, e.g. comprehensive health and public transport services?

Dangers of Large Regions

These considerations point to two possible dangers in the proposal for a few very large regions. On the one hand, they might have so few powers they would fail to arouse enough public interest. On the other hand, their powers might be so similar to those of the central government that wasteful overlapping and artificial conflict would be inevitable. A combination of a strong national framework with the greatest possible decentralisation to city regions seems to offer the best chance of a creative partnership between central and local government.

There is another snag about large regional authorities. Their establishment would almost certainly mean setting up *three* tiers of local government. For if there was only one other tier, then it must be either city regions (too big and remote to be the *smallest* local authorities), or district councils for much smaller areas (too small and numerous to stand up to the regional councils). All three tiers would be needed and this seems unnecessarily complicated. With city regions as the main local authorities a lower tier of district councils could vary in size and functions according to the local circumstances.

I do not mean to suggest that there is no need for a medium of democratic expression at the regional level. But could this not be achieved by bodies with representatives from the half dozen or so city regions within each larger region, something like the standing conferences of local planning authorities that now exist in several regions?

City Regions

There is perhaps an even greater need for organised democratic expression at the lowest levels—neighbourhoods in the towns and villages in the countryside. But again, could this not best be achieved by bodies that would not themselves run services, but that the higher authorities would be *obliged* to consult on all matters affecting the smaller area? They could be advisory councils with representatives of tenants' and residents' associations, trade union branches, women's organisations, and civic societies.

But if it is essential for democracy to begin at the grass roots, as the Americans put it, it is equally essential for it to be transmitted upwards through a series of comprehensible levels. I think a good case can be made for the view that the city region is the most comprehensible of the different levels.

Derek Senior has written eloquently of the absurdity of including Liverpool and Manchester in the same local government area (*The Regional City*, Longmans, 1966). To take another example, are East Anglians more conscious of the whole region from the Stour to the Wash or of the city regions focused on Ipswich, Norwich, Cambridge and Peterborough? Towns like these (and Plymouth, Oxford, Leicester, Middlesbrough—to mention a few at random) are surely the most important *centres* of modern life. It is *within* the areas they dominate that most people find work, shops, education, recreation, entertainment. These are the places with "inter-city" railway stations, coach stations, airports, universities, technical colleges, evening newspapers, league football teams, theatres, and other things that make for functional unity and local loyalty. Hence they appear to be the areas within which local services could be most effectively operated, and within which public opinion could be most easily mobilised to press for such improvements as integrated public transport, better health services, comprehensive secondary education, country parks, and more sports facilities. Whether we view the problem from the standpoint of efficiency or democracy city regions therefore seem to provide the best basis for major local authorities.

It is true that some of the likely city regions are at present without some important social and economic functions, or have a smaller population than is desirable for the most efficient operation of some local government services. But should it not be one of the aims of socialist planning to correct these deficiencies, and to guide the distribution of population and employment so that each city region obtained the necessary minimum? And would this not be achieved most readily by a system of strong city region councils working within the framework of a national plan?

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Ted Berrow

I AM sorry that Bert Ward in his lengthy discussion of the problems of Local Government (*Marxism Today*, March 1968) seemed to get so bogged down in discussing the merits of various types of "regional government" over each other that he omitted to examine from a Communist point of view the forces, thoroughly reactionary forces, which are at present pressing forward towards regional authorities even less subject to democratic pressure and control than the present local authorities are.

Bert Ward rightly criticises the Maud Committee report, which Tory and Labour Councillors in the current round of local elections are praising to the skies. If implemented together with current plans for larger local authorities, this report could leave the whole control of the social services, housing and town planning for a population of a million or more in the hands of an indirectly elected Management Board and some highly paid council officials. The sort of people who would be elevated to the Management Board would be the sort who at present become Aldermen in the big cities: elderly and reactionary burghers, predominately male. They would hardly need the pressure from local industry which they would inevitably be subject to, to ensure that they would be the perfect instruments for bureaucratic capitalist government, the local or regional equivalent of what we get from Downing Street and Whitehall.

Regional government in the present stage of capitalist society inevitably means no devolution from the centre, but centralisation from the countries and boroughs. It is the parallel of what is happening throughout British industry. We do not welcome the new cartels industrially and we do not want them in local government.

Parish Councils

Unconciously Bert Ward raises a very valid point in his conclusion. He says that if local government were measured by proximity, it might be argued that "parish councils are a superior form of local authority to county councils". Indeed it might; and not only because of proximity. Parishes in England and Wales have a unique form of government, the parish meeting, where, if the people of the locality think fit, they can exercise real control over their elected representatives. Parish councils are rarely elected in wards and frequently represent a real, conscious community. We all know that not only are there areas where, in this situation, Communists find it possible to get elected to the parish council, but, even where they are not elected, higher votes are frequently recorded for our candidates in these elections than for our candidates in the large cities where wards are considerably bigger than an entire parish.

Clearly the parish is too small to conduct a great deal of local government work, but its role can certainly be strengthened. For example, what about the management boards of village schools being directly responsible to the Parish Councils, and through them to the County Councils or Divisional Education Committees?

It will quite rightly be argued that Britain is an urban country and that we cannot base our local government pattern on what is suitable for communities of a thousand people each. This is true, but I have understood in the past that Communist policy was for ward councils, housing estate committees and the like. It should not be beyond the wit of the Party, with its considerable experience in organising people both industrially and on a community basis, to devise the urban equivalent of parish councils and the parish meetings which go with them.

Let us not waste our time competing with the Bow Group in designing the best way to take local government away from the localities. Rather let us try to make really local government a meaningful conception.

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The Future of British Transport

C. G. Couzens

AS an ex-railwayman who up till quite recently witnessed at first-hand the day-by-day destruction of his industry, I find J. Hostettler's article in your May 1967 issue academic to say the least in that out of 6¾ pages (despite that he is writing in a periodical entitled *Marxism Today*) he devoted (1) few column-inches indeed to an analysis of the fundamental ingredients in our national communications position which of course is in essence capitalist-contrived. (2) He spared slightly more than seven column-inches to consideration of the place of the railways within our national transport machinery, and he omits *seriously* to refer to such factors as (3) costings between various means of transport, (4) the colossal scale with which land is being absorbed by new roads and road-ancillary businesses for so small a country, (5) the importation of foreign fuel for the operation of the newer vehicle as opposed to the old (i.e. motivation by oil as against coal and/or electricity), (6) population pressure and distribution and (7) the labour-force commitment to the internal combustion engine.

All of these factors are neglected, some criminally, in our present social set-up, which by and large, is that of a brain-washed community.

Mr. John Hostettler shows in his paragraphs 4 and 5 that he realises this but is he, himself, entirely immune? . . . In his introduction "The Heart of the Problem" I read: "The first essential is to see that transport is today an urban problem" . . . and a little farther on "Secondly, I think we should accept that the private motor car is a boon with a great potential for good . . ." etc. . . . yet he must see that the problem is only presented to us (inextricably) as an urban problem—intrinsically it is one of having invested in the car, and as for his second proposition—I read him further on: ". . . the car must not be seen as a necessity for every journey. Indeed its main purpose should be recreational . . ." which is asking most owners to regard it as an idle investment for much of its life, in supine equation with recent "Ministers of Transport" who look upon half-used railways with a perfect sangfroid! Even more cogently of course does this argument apply to the "C" licensed lorry which your contributor conceded should be abolished.

Having regard to the Editor's eye on available space I can enlarge upon my points only a little: (1) I often think that Marxists could with advantage substitute the word "individualist" for "capitalist", and the motor car is essentially an individualistic conception for most people (a box on wheels which *I* may enter instantly to run round to so-and-so's front door regardless of all impedimenta), hence its limitations in conditions of congestion, its steep costs in man-hours of upkeep, per person safely carried; and its egregious dictation of re-planning "to and from your side-door garage" should be well understood.

Importance of the Railways

(2) Mr. Hostettler nowhere betrays knowledge of the past value of the railways in the national economy (the industrial revolution of last century could not have taken place without them), the fact that up to fairly recent years they still carried approximately 50 per cent of the nation's freight (though he quotes towards the foot of column 1, page 143, the questionable current figure of 80 per cent for road transport (that is to say—has the rot proceeded so far? . . . and, query, are we communicating on a ton-mile basis?).

The potential value of the railways is one which can only be visualised in conditions of their restoration, and some there are who have watched the following: the dispersal of industry from beside the network; curtailment of the network; destruction, and sale of assets including land; widely enforced retirement and displacement of skilled personnel; short-sighted amalgamations, concentration without adaptation or pioneering successes proved elsewhere in the past; recruitment of academic people in key positions whose only approach is the superficial and negative one of constant reappraisal, renewal and/or pruning in the light of making every sector and every element in every sector pay for itself; refusal even to "cushion" the impact upon the public of untoward change (in one instance I knew, a mentally cleansed officer invariably saw fit to moralise thus: "Now we are living with a declining industry . . ."); allowing staff, indeed fostering among staff, the idea they have little prospect of advancement in status throughout their railway "career"; instituting, many years ago, a staff having a vested interest (by reason of

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their positions) in dispensing with "Unremunerative Services".

And then there came on the scene Dr. Beeching who, dressed the rump of the undertaking for public inspection and applause. Need I go on, except to enquire of Mr. Hostettler "does he propose to begin again within the context of Britain's current social set-up?"

Comparison of Costs

(3) Regarding costs, Mr. Hostettler may care to look at these comparative figures for different means of transport published recently by Mr. Roger Calvert, M.A., Inst.T., in *The Butty*, quarterly of the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust Ltd. (Mr. Calvert is Hon. Sec. of the National Council on Inland Transport):

(a) A horse can pull (in similar circumstances) one ton if the load is on a road vehicle, five tons if the load is in a rail vehicle, and 30 tons if the load is water-borne.

(b) A thousand tons of freight can be moved in 50 road lorries, in 30 rail wagons, or in one barge.

(c) The 50 lorries need 50 (in some countries 100) men, the train needs 3 men, and the barge needs 3 men.

(d) The 50 lorries will cost £300,000, the train £75,000 and the barge £50,000.

(e) The lorries will last 10 years, the train 30 years, and the barge 50 years.

Socialist Solution Needed

(4) The annual agricultural-land switch in favour of road transport now assumes such proportions that I suggest your contributor consults *Labour Research* regarding the contrast: track and shunting-yard acreage of railway land needed per ton-mile of freight conveyed each 24 hours, say 40 years ago, or in world-war time when railways were operating near maximum capacity; a similar figure for track and station sidings and loops per passenger carried say in the peak wartime years. I am not aware however whether any corresponding "sampling" figure exists with respect to say arterial road traffic even if highway authorities render road "surface figures". I would claim however that the rail potential is much the more impressive.

As to (5), I would pose before Mr. Hostettler our independence as an autonomous power (particularly a capitalist power!) and raise the question of our financial vulnerability.

(6) Regarding both aspects to which I allude: British capitalism, whilst continuing possibly to probe and tinker with "solutions" will in fact operate none. The current *laissez-faire* attitude is too profitable.

(7) This formidable, and still developing vested interest is commonly under-rated, but I believe now extends to two million men directly employed. This is almost three times the maximum railway labour-force in that industry's heyday. Instances are not wanting of power exerted by workers in retaining traffic on roads diverted within recent years from the railway, this in the face of what is socially desirable.

Concluding; whilst we must not overlook to use all possible opportunities of pressing for an integrated public transport system—exposing current myths as to costs—at the same time we have to instil or reawaken people to a socialist concept or we dance as a company infected by the tarantula.

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